

DEDICATION.

· This is not a Place for your Lordship's Pedigree, or the History of your Ancestors: Let it suffice, that as you are derived on your Mother's Side, from a very Antient Family, remarkable for Wit, and a refin'd Understanding; so by your Noble Father's, you inherit Prudence and Valour: Many of his Ancestors having, with the greatest Reputation, fill'd very considerable Military Employments in the *Low-Countries*, from the Time of the Emperor *Charles V.* down to this Day.

DEDICATION.

But, my Lord, You have no need to look so far back for Examples, to excite you to the Pursuit of Honour and Vertue: Your Father is before your Eyes; whose Titles of *Baron* and *Earl*, are the Rewards of a long Series of Brave and Honourable Actions, conferr'd upon him by our Two last Princes.

To these, my Lord, You are Heir, and your own good Sense and Inclinations assuredly promise, that You will give an Addition of lustre to your Noble Family.

DEDICATION.

by the Brightness of your
own Character.

Your Lordship will pardon the Liberty I have taken, in prefixing your Name to this little Treatise, which may serve to Amuse you with a short View of what you have already gone over.

And I beg you will be persuaded, that I have no other Design in it, than to publish the Sence I have of the many Favours conferred upon Me by the Earl of *more* and your Self; the Ambition I have

DEDICATION.

of being always consider'd,
as I really am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Obedient, and

Most Humble Servant,

J. Beaver.

THE



THE
P R E F A C E.



THE Original of the ensuing Discourse, (being an Historical Deduction of the French Laws, from Cæsar's Conquest of the Gauls, to the Modern Times) was first publish'd in French about the Year 1708. and obtain'd the Esteem and Applause of all Knowing and Judicious Persons, as a Work full of exquisite and admirable Learning, and highly necessary for a right Understanding of the French Laws.

'Tis true, it at first appear'd without a Name, as those exquisite Institutes of the French Laws, compos'd by Monsieur Argout, &c. But seeing since his Death, it has receiv'd the Impressions, been constantly prefix'd as a Preface or Introduction to those Institutes, we may well presume, both were compos'd

posed by the same Hand: And indeed, not only the subject Matter, but the 'Style and Connection of both Tractates, do manifest an Identity of Thought and Language.

Now, as this Treatise is by all acknowledg'd to be of admirable Use, as an Introduction to the Knowledge of the French Laws in particular; so it must be confess'd, with respect both to the Civil and Canon Law in general. The Reader may here trace them from their, very Fountains and Originals; whereby the several Authors who have written Systems or Institutes of those Laws, (as Monsieur Domat and others) and in short, the whole Body of the Civil and Canon Law, may be better illustrated and explained.

But what chiefly induced the Publishing hercof in English, was the great Analogy or Conformity observed herein, between the Laws or Customs of the Antient Gauls and Franks, and those of our Britons and Saxons, many of which will here appear to be derived from the same Original. As for Instance,

*We here find the Antient Gauls to have been governed by certain * Usages and Customs, not by any written Law. So we read*

* *Cæsar de bello Gallico. Lib. 5. & 6.*

of the Britons, they had no written Law, but were govern'd by certain Traditional Usages, preserved by means of their Bards and Druids, who were Priests and Judges, as well amongst the Britons as the Gauls: For we have it from good Authority, that in both Nations, the Druids had originally the sole Power of deciding of Rights, and determining Controversies. Which Power continued here, till the time that the Emperor Claudius, having absolutely conquered Britain, by his Edict prohibited the Druids any longer, to exercise their Religious Rites*, &c.

And hence, as Selden observes, it came to pass the † Druids, being prohibited the Exercise of those Rites, such Nations as were govern'd by them in point of Law, viz. the Gauls, Britons, &c. grew regardless of their Authority; and not respecting them as before, became prone to receive and embrace the Roman Law. And this occasioned that Observation of the Poet,

Gallia, Caufidicos, docuit facunda Britannos.

Juvenal. Sat. 15.

d said, Whereas heretofore the
Druids, taught those of Gaul the

Edictum Imperatoris Claudii. Cap. 25.

De Jure Druidum. p. 12.

Know-

Sat. 7.

Knowledge of their Law ; now the Gauls do instruct the Britons in the Roman Law : And for this Reason, he elsewhere calls Gaul Nutricula Causidicorum.

As for the Office of the British Bards, especially of the Chief, called Penkert, Penbeirt or Penbeirdh, the Reader may consult the Laws of Howel Dhaa, i. e. The Good, which, we hear, will shortly be publish'd by the Reverend Dr. Wotton.

*But to return to the Roman Law. We find the same fully established in this Island, in the Reign of the Emperor Severus : For he kept his Prætorian Court at York ; wherein the fam'd Papinian for some time sat as Judge, having those two great Civilians, Paul and Ulpian for his Assessors *. And in the Code, of the Civil Law †, we have a Rescript or Decree, made at York, in the Name of that Emperor and his Son Antoninus.*

Pag. 10.
and 11.

'Tis also observed by our Author, That the same Magistrates, Language and Laws, were at the same time used at York, Cologne, Lyons, Cordoua, and Carthage ; and we may well add, in most other eminent Towns

* Dion. Cassius, in Vita Severi.

† Cod. Lib. 3. Tit. 32. Cap. 1.

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and Cities, where there were Roman Colonies settled: For which the Reader may consult Lipsius de Magnitudine Romani Imperii, Lib. 1. cap. 6. and Velferus de Antiquit. Augustæ Vindelicor. Lib. 2.

And we have no Reason to doubt that the Roman Law was received, nay studied and practised in Justinian's Time, in most Parts of the Roman Empire: But from his Death, which happened about the Year 565. to the Year 1125. it became so neglected and disused in the Western Empire, that we don't find any Person during all that time, that there profess'd it: Nor indeed, could it be otherwise while the Body of it was lost.

But as our Author takes notice, the Emperor Lothair, after near 600 Tears, taking Amalfi in Apulia, found an Old Copy of the Digests or Pandects, and gave it to the Pisans: whence 'tis called, Litera Pisana; which being afterwards carried to Florence, is to this Day carefully preserved in the Great Duke's Palace, and never brought forth or produced without Lighted Torches and other great Ceremonies.*

face to his *Title of Honour*, Edit.

And

*And whereas Justinian had by an Edict commanded, that the Civil Law should not be read or taught but at Rome, Berytus, and Constantinople : So Lothair by a like Edict enjoined, That Bologna should be Legum & Juris Schola una & sola *; Tet, neither of these Edicts were observed.*

For as Irnier taught the Civil Law at Bologna, without any regard to the First; so Aro and Placentinus, who immediately succeeded him, read and taught it publickly at Montpellier and Tholouse, contrary to the Second Edict.

As to the University of Paris, our Author indeed says, that Pope Honorius III. about the Year 1200. expressly forbad the Study of the Civil Law there; but adds, that his Decree thereupon deserves Examination, which has lately been done by Monsieur Claude Joseph de Ferriere, who has shewn beyond Contradiction, that the Pope's Prohibition related only to Priests and Monks, who were too much addicted to that Study, and apt to neglect their proper Business, the reading and searching of the Holy Scripture.

* Ibid. See Paul Merulas, Cosmog. p. i. lib. 4. c. 23.

And tho' this Decree was not then published, the very same Reason induced our King Stephen to put out an Edict against the Study of the Civil Law at Oxford, and to silence Vicarius, who began to profess and teach it in that University, about the Fourteenth Year of his Reign. But his Orders were not followed; for John of Salisbury, a Man of great Note who lived at that time, says, Parum valuit Stephani prohibitio, nam eo magis invaluit virtus Legis, Deo favente, quo eam amplius nitebatur impietas subvertere.

This may serve in general, to shew how far the Roman or Civil Law, was antiently regarded both Here and in France. As for particular Laws mention'd in the ensuing Treatise, the Analogy between them and our Saxon Laws, will more fully appear from Dr. Wilkins's Notes on those Laws, lately published; wherein he has compared those Laws with the Burgundian, Ripuarian, Sallick, and other Laws mention'd by our Author; and shewn, that they all help to confirm and illustrate the Laws of this Nation.



T H E
H I S T O R Y

Of the ORIGINE of the
French L A W S, &c.



THE Inhabitants of * *Gaul* (for The Design of this Treatise. near 500 Years) before the Irruption of the *Franks* into that Countrey, were wholly govern'd by the Antient *Roman* Laws, and which afterwards continued to be observed under the Kings of the First and Second Race; but mix'd with some Barbarian Customs, and the Capitularies of those Kings.

* Touching the Antient *Gauls*, &c. see Monsieur *Peyron's* Book *Of the Antiquities of Nations*: Wherein he shews, the *Gauls*, and *Britons* or *Welsh*, to have from the same Original, i. e. *Gomer* the Eldest of *Japhet*; and that there was an entire Community between them in their Language, Laws, Customs, Habits, &c. [See also *Versteegan*, p. 190, who makes the *Germans*, *Gauls* and *Britons*, to be originally the same People.

THE † Troubles that happen'd in the Tenth Century so confounded all those ancient *Laws*, that at the Beginning of the *Third* * *Race*, there was no other Law in *France*, but a very uncertain *Usage*; which the Learned having afterwards improv'd by the Study of the *Roman Law*, their Decisions, mix'd with that *Usage*, formed those *Customs*, which in Process of time were reduced into Writing by Publick Authority. But of later times, the *French Kings* have Enacted several *New Laws*, by their Ordinances or Edicts.

THESE are the Heads I design to treat of in this Discourse; and I hope to be excus'd, if sometimes I make use of probable Conjectures, considering how little

† 'Twas in the Tenth Century, That the *Danes* and other Northern Rovers over-ran both *France* and *England*; at which time *Jus sepultum*, & *Leges soppitæ sunt*, &c. [See the 16th of Edward the Confessor's Laws.]

* The Three Races are the *Merovingian*, the *Carlovingian*, and *Capetian*: The First so call'd from *Merovée*, who came out of *Germany*, and settled in *France* about the Year 448: The Second, from *Charles* the Son of *Pepin*, called *Charlemagne*, who began his Reign about the Year 770: The Third, from *Hugh Capet*, who *Anno* 987, succeeded *Lewis the Idle*, being the last Male of the *Carlovingian Race*. From this *Hugh* the present King of *France* is descended in an Uninterrupted Line. [See the Histories of Du Hail-
lan, Mezeray, &c.]

has been hitherto said or done, to clear up these Points.

I shall call that the *Antient Law*, which was observ'd till the Tenth Century; because since that time the Practice of it has been so interrupted and discontinu'd, that there are hardly any Footsteps of it now remaining; and I shall give that the Name of *New Law*, which follow'd under the Kings of the Third Race: Because tho' it underwent great Alterations, there still remains a Traditional Succession of Laws and Maxims, which may be trac'd down to our Times.

I question whether it will be worth while to look so far back as the Original *Gauls*; and whether it be probable, that after so many Changes, we have any Law left that comes immediately from them.

HOWEVER, I shall here give the Reader out of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, an *Idea* of Comment. Book 6. of the Wars in Gallia. their Antient Manners or Customs, and Civil Government; in which, perhaps, some may discover a great Conformity with those of the latter Times.

"THE whole Countrey of the *Gauls* Antient Govern-ment of the Gauls described.
 " was originally canton'd into petty States,
 " independent on each other: (most of
 " whose Names are still continu'd in those
 " which were then their * Capital Cities, as

* *Vide Mezeray, Tom. 1. P. 2.*

“ *Paris, Sens, Tours, and many others.*) The
 “ Persons of greatest Account among them
 “ were the *Druids*, and the *Knights* : The
 “ rest of the People liv’d in a sort of Bon-
 “ dage, could undertake nothing of them-
 “ selves, were never summon’d to any Pub-
 “ lick Debate ; nay, many, oppress’d by the
 “ Severity of their Creditors, or the Ty-
 “ ranny of the Nobility, surrender’d them-
 “ selves their Absolute Slaves.

Druids.

“ THE *Druids* had the Management of
 “ all that concerned Religion and Learn-
 “ ing, and even the Administration of
 “ Justice in Criminal Matters, in their
 “ great Annual Assemblies : Their Power
 “ was very great, and they were exempted
 “ from attending the War, or paying any
 “ Taxes : The Penalty inflicted upon such
 “ as disobeyed them, was a kind of Excom-
 “ munication : They were thereby excluded
 “ from their Sacrifices and Publick Assem-
 “ blies, and esteemed as Impious and Proflig-
 “ ate Miscreants : All Men avoided their
 “ Conversation ; and they were incapable of
 “ any Degree of Honour, or even of Prose-
 “ cuting their Rights in Courts of Justice.

Knights.

“ THE *Knights*, for their Parts, were all
 “ Soldiers, and attended the Wars, which
 “ between those Petty States happen’d al-
 “ most every Year. Their greatest Glory

The Reader may here observe the great Analogy
 between the antient Customs of the *Gauls* and *Britons*.

“ con-

“ consisted in being courted by a vast Num-
 “ ber of Vassals and Dependants, who fol-
 “ low’d them as occasion requir’d. They
 “ never allow’d their Children to appear
 “ publickly in their Presence, till they were
 “ of Years fit to bear Arms.” All this, and
 much more, may be seen at large, in the Intituled,
 Collectio Collection of *German Laws* made by *Gol-* Consuet.
 Legum
 Imper.
 Franco-
 furti, 1613 *dastus*; wherein the Customs of the *Gauls*
 and *Germans* are recited in the express
 Words of *Cæsar* and *Tacitus*, and ranged
 under different Titles.

As the *Romans* extended their Conquests The Ro-
 man Law
 brought
 first into
 Gaul. over the *Gauls*, their Language, Manners,
 and Laws established themselves among
 them *. as in other Countries: For the
 the whole *Roman* Empire was but One
 Great Body, actuated by the same Spirit,
 and agreeing in all its Parts in an ex-
 act Symmetry, by the mutual Dependance
 each had upon the other. All the Go-

* Notwithstanding what is here said, we must observe, That the *Romans*, as to Civil and Personal Rights, left every Nation they conquer’d the Liberty of using their own Laws; except in such Cases only, as immediately respected the Government. And therefore our Author’s Meaning here must be, That the *Gauls*, as well as other Conquer’d Nations, finding the *Roman* Laws more Exact in the Decision of Rights, and more Equitable than their own, voluntarily embraced the *Roman* Law. [*See vide pæst.*]

vernours of Provinces, and Publick Officers, down to the *Apparitors*, were natural-born *Romans*, not to mention the rest of their Retinue, which they called the *Co-hort*, and was always very numerous; and their Employments lasted so short a time, that their Residence in the Provinces could not work any considerable Alteration in them. The Farmers of the Publick Revenues were *Romans*, and some, of the Degree of Knighthood. The Legions were made up of, † *Romans*: And besides all these, who were in the Provinces upon Publick Service, many *Romans* staid there on their own private Account; as Bankers, Merchants, Husbandmen and Grasers, especially where there was any Colony or Settlement: Nay, abundance, without ever stirring out of *Rome* or *Italy*, got Considerable Fortunes out of the Provinces by the Industry of their Slaves.

ON the other hand, the Natives of the Provinces often went to *Rome*, either as Deputies, to transact Publick Business, or to manage their Private Affairs, or to make their Court, or out of Curiosity; and those of Chief Note

† i. e. Either Native or Emancipated.

among them, claimed a Right of Hospitality from the Principal Citizens, or at least were under their * Patronage and Protection.

* We may observe from *Cicero*, *Livy*, and *Tacitus*, That 'twas usual for the Nations and Provinces subdued by the *Romans*, to have the Patronage of some Eminent *Roman* Citizen; who residing at *Rome*, and being a Member of the Senate, might, in case of any Oppression of their Governors, apply to such Patron for Relief, who was obliged to represent the Matter to the Senate, and so endeavour a Redress of their Grievances. [See *Tacit. Hist. lib. 1, &c.*]

But as to the *Roman* Custom of Patrons and Clients, that was practised among the *Romans* themselves, even in the Infancy of *Rome*, by virtue of a Law made by *Romulus*; as *Paulus Manutius* in his Book *De Senatu Romano*, has truly observ'd; whose remarkable Words affording us an evident View of the Original of the *Feudal Law*, (which is generally, tho' without any Foundation, attributed to the *Lombards*;) I shall therefore give the Curious Reader the Substance of them, viz.

Romulus, ut erat singulari consilio, &c. cum vereretur ne quid injuriæ Pleb., per inscitiam circumventa, à Senatoribus ferret; indeque Concordiam sine qua diuturnum nihil est, exorta Seditio dissolveret; universæ Civitatis animos quasi necessitudinis vinculo conjunxit, constituit enim Clientelas & Patrocinia: quod erat hujusmodi, ut Plebei Patronum sibi deligerent à Senatoribus, quem quisque vellet, & Senatores Plebeis in clientelam receptis Fidem suam ac studium benignissimè præstarent; Erat autem hæc inter utriusque officiorum vicissitudo, ut Patricii Plebeios ab usu rerum urbanarum imperitos, consiliis eruderint, accutatos deferderent, & præsentés, & absentes omni ope tue-

Patrons
or Clients
like
our Lords
and Tenants.

Their mutual
protection &c.

rentur....

rection. Some, who settled at *Rome*, enjoy'd, not only the Freedom of the City, but also were chosen Senators and Magistrates;

Like our *rentur*.... E contra, Clientes ad collocandas Patronorum filias, si Parentibus copiae non suppetere, de suo conferrent: in aru inopiam gratuitam pecuniam erogarent: ab hostibus in bello captos redimerent; in Magistratibus & honoribus (petendū) officiosa sedulitate deducerent. Etiam, Quod si Clientem Patronus, aut Patronum Clientis accusasset, contrāve Testimonium dixisset, aut suffragium tulisset, si Proditionis Lege tenebatur, cūmq; qui occidisset, piē fecisset, & infernē Jovī hostiam mactasse putabatur.

Here you have, not only the Original of *Patrons* and *Clients*, but also the Duties incumbent on each; the Breach whereof seems to be *Capital*, and no less than *Treason*.

After which, *Paulus Manutius* immediately adds a Passage, which more fully explains the Sence of our Author, as to the whole Provinces and Nations putting themselves under the Patronage and Protection of some Eminent Roman, viz.

Atque hujusmodi Clientelæ quāquam ab initio potissimum Urbanae Plebis causæ sunt instituta, tamen per ea quæ consecuta sunt tempora, audā jam Urbis Ditione, ita (Clientelæ) sunt amplificata, ut non Coloniarum solum, sed Gentes etiam, aut Bello victæ, aut Societate Amicitiaque Populo Romano conjunctæ, sese Civium Romanorum in Patrocinio contulerint: Sic M. Marcellum Syracusanū, Q. Fabium Allobroges, & alios alii, &c.

But as to the mutual Duties of *Lords* and *Tenants*, the Reader may please to compare the *Grand Customier* of *Normandy*, Cap. 35. with our *Glawvil*, Lib. 9. Cap. 4, 5, 6, 8, &c. *Bract.* Fol. 78. *Fleta*, Lib. 2. c. 40. & Lib. 3. c. 14. See also *Co. Lit.* 65. 76. 100.

strates; infomuch, that many of the Emperors were Descendants of Provincial Families. In short, they were often made *Romans*, without going out of their own Countrey, by a Grant of the Freedom of the City; which was not only bestow'd on particular Persons, but upon whole Towns: And after the Emperor *Antoninus* had conferr'd that Honour upon all the Subjects of the Empire, there were *Romans* of all Nations.

'Tis true, this General Intercourse did not introduce equal Changes in all the Provinces: The *Romans* made a vast Difference between the *Greeks* and other Nations, which they called *Barbarians*. For, as they were beholden for all their Politeness to the *Greeks*, who also taught them the Liberal Arts and Sciences; they always very much esteemed them: So that the *Romans*, contented with the Dominion or Superiority, suffer'd them to live according to their Antient Laws. They learned the *Greek* Language, to save the *Greeks* the Trouble of speaking *Latin*. They copied them in their Manners; and setting aside what related to the General Administration of the Empire, alter'd more the *Romans*, than the *Romans* the *Greeks*: Whereas they held the *Barbarians* in great Contempt, over whom they had a double Advantage, of Politeness.

ness and Power; and they imagin'd that it was the greatest Instance of Kindness, to oblige them to a Conformity with the *Roman Way* of living. On the contrary, the *Barbarians* did admire the *Romans*, and strove to imitate their manner of Life, as being both more splendid and convenient than their own.

Quære of
this, and
see the
Notes ante

IN this Diversity of Manners was the whole Empire divided: All *Greece* and the East, that is to say, all that Part which devolved to *Alexander's* Successors, used the *Grecian* Language and Customs; the rest spoke *Latin*, and followed the *Roman* Laws and Manners. This last Division included almost all that which has since been called the Western Empire, viz. *Africa*, *Mauritania*, *Spain*, the *Gauls*, Part of the *British* Isles, a small Portion of *Germany*, *Rhetia*, *Pannonia*, and *Illyrium*.

THE Truth of the foregoing Remarks will be acknowledg'd by all Persons who are well read in the *Roman* History.

As for such as are not, they will perhaps, hardly believe, that the same Language, Magistrates and Laws were at one and the same time used at *Cologne*, *Tork*,
Lyons,

Lyon, Cordoña and Carthage. But there are some Proofs peculiar to *Gaul*; which shew, that it became at last intirely *Roman*: If we consider, first, the native Original of several of the Emperors, especially in the Fourth Century; next, the Writings of the *Gaulick* Authors, as *Ausonius*, *Salvienus*, and *Sidonius*; then the Names of the *Gauls*, and among the rest, of their Bishops, till about the Eighth Century; as also, the Names of abundance of Cities and Towns, as *Lagny*, *Latiniacus* *ager* or *fundus*, *Percy*, *Patriciacus*, *Savigny*, (or as others pronounce it, *Savigne*.) *Sabiniacus*, and many others, which still wear the Badge of their *Roman* Masters: And lastly, the Language the *French* now speak, which has infinitely a greater Mixture of *Latin* Words, than of any other; notwithstanding the Variety of *Northern* People, that succeeded the *Romans* in *Gaul*.

BUT to keep close to my Subject: There can be no doubt the *Roman Law* was observed in *Gaul*, if we reflect, that one of the Four *Prætorian Præfects* resided there; that this Magistrate had the sovereign Administration of Justice in the Emperor's Absence, and was Superior to all the Governors of the Provinces; and that the Titles of several Laws in *Justinian's Code*, shew they were calculated

Cod. l. 10.
tit. 38. de
Municipalibus.

for

for *Gaul*, or the People of that Countrey.

To all which may be added, that the *Romans* had peaceable Possession of *Gaul* for Five entire Centuries. *Cæsar* compleated his Conquests about Fifty Years before the Nativity of our Saviour; and *Merovée*, who was the first *Frenchman* that made any considerable Settlement in *Gaul*, did not fix there till the Year 450. after the Incarnation. Five Hundred Years were sufficient to produce great Alterations in a Countrey, and what hath been so long practis'd, is not easily abolish'd.

LET us then be assur'd, that when the *Franks* subdu'd the *Gauls*, they found them entirely *Romans*; speaking *Latin*, and living according to the *Roman Laws*.

BUT here it will be convenient to observe, what the *Roman Law* was at that Time; for 'tis plain, it could not be *Justinian's*, which was compil'd only for the Use of the Countries under his Dominion, and almost a Hundred Years after the *Franks* broke into the *Gauls*.

What the
Roman
Law con-
sisted of.

Now the *Roman Law* of that time, consisted of the several Constitutions of the Emperors, and Writings of the *Civilians*: These Constitutions were collected

And into Three Codes; the *Gregorian*, the *Hermogenian*, and *Theodosian*, publish'd by the Emperor *Theodosius* the Younger, in 435. which confirm'd the Two Former. Afterwards, the *Novels* of the same *Theodosius* and his Successors were added.

THE Writings of the *Civilians* were such as the *Theodosian Code* authorized; as, those of *Papinianus*, *Paulus*, *Caius*, *Ulpianus*, *Modestinus*, and others cited by them namely, *Sævola*, *Sabinus*, *Julianus* and *Marcellus*.

By this Restriction, it appears, the Works of the rest of the *Civilians*, some Fragments of which, we meet with in the *Digest*, were either wholly unknown, or of no Credit in the Western Empire. I am farther of Opinion, that the Text of the * *Perpetual Edict*, of the † *Laws*, of

* The Number of *Pretorian Edicts* growing too great, and many Inconveniencies ensuing thereupon, the Emperor *Adrian* employ'd *Julianus*, a Famous *Civilian*, to make One Edict out of the whole, which was to serve for a Rule in all future Cases. This they called the *Perpetual Edict*; because the *Pretors* were never after permitted to publish any.

† *Lex est quod populus Romanus Senatorio Magistratu interrogante (veluti Consule) constituebat.*

the * *Plebiscita*, of the † *Senatus Consulta*, and particularly the Text of the || *Twelve Tables*, were at that time utterly lost, or rarely to be met with; because when *Justinian* had a mind, in the following Century, to form a compleat Body of all the Laws, he took all his Materials out of the Emperors Constitutions, and Works of the *Civilians*. This also appears, by comparing the *Mosaic* Law with the *Roman*, as it was used in the Reign of *Theodosius the Younger*: For it contained only certain Decisions of the Civil Lawyers, and some of the Constitutions taken from the Three Codes, with a small Portion of the *Theodosian Code*, which then, perhaps, was only publish'd.

* *Plebiscitum est, quod plebs plebeio magistratu interrogante (veluti Tribuno) constituatur.*

† *Senatus Consultum est, quod Senatus jubet aut constituit.* Instit. lib. 1. tit. 2. par. 4.

|| The Laws of the *Twelve Tables* are so called, from Twelve Tables of Brass, in which they were engraved. They consisted of the chief Maxims of Government, pick'd out of the *Grecian Laws*, the Laws of *Rome* under the Kings, and the Customs of the Place: A most excellent Composition; having in them (as *Cicero* in his Book *de Oratore*, says) every thing that was useful and good, mentioned in the Books of the Philosophers.

THE most considerable Part therefore of the *Roman Law*, was the antient *Theodosian Code*, which had the good Fortune longest to survive the Ruin of the *Western Empire*; and many believe, it was this only, that was abstractedly call'd the *Roman Law*: And indeed, *Gregory de Tours* makes mention of one *Andarchius*, in the Service of *Sigibert Son of Clotarius the First*, who, he says, was very expert in the *Theodosian Law*.

THE *Franks*, and other barbarous conquering Nations, brought with them a New Law into *Gaul*: But as they had not the use of Letters in their Tongues, so their Laws were only writ in *Latin* by some *Romans*, after they had been settled and converted to the Christian Faith.

AT the time of their first Incursions, they were govern'd only by meer Customs, transmitted to them by their Ancestors, which served them for a Guide in all their Determinations; and their manner of living affording little occasion for Law-Suits, made them not very exact in their Forms.

The Laws of the Barbarians meer Customs.

ALL these Nations came from *Germany*, whose Manners are described by *Tacitus* in his History of that Country.

WAR and Hunting was their whole Employment; and as they had no fix'd Habitation, nor other Goods than Cattle, their common Disputes, arose either from Personal Quarrels or Theft; and those were decided in the Publick Meetings, either according to the Depositions of Witnesses upon the Spot, or in doubtful Cases, by Combat, or the Trials of *Fire* and *Water*.

THE *Romans*, tho' conquer'd by these People, were far from imitating them in any thing, and shew'd the same Aversion to them, as we should to *Tartars* or *Cossacks*. Besides, the *Barbarians*, whose End of Conquest was not Ambition or Glory, but to Plunder and live more at Large than they could in their own wretched Countries, were contented with the Dominion, and suffer'd the *Romans* to live as they had done before.

ON the contrary, they themselves imitated the *Romans*, whom their Forefathers had long before valued and admir'd.

THUS their first Kings gave their Officers the same Titles as the *Romans*, they call'd the Governors of their Provinces,
Dukes,

Dukes, Earls, and Vicars; and those who served about their Persons, *Chancellors, Refrendaries, Chamberlains*, and in general *Palatins*: They thought it Honourable to be stiled *Consuls* and *Patricians*, and were fond of being called *Glorious* * and *Illustrious*; which last, were no more than ordinary Titles, commonly bestow'd by the *Romans* upon certain Magistrates, and those not of the highest Distinction.

THEY had the same Species of Coin as the *Romans*, that is, Gold † Shillings, and Silver Pence; and their Kings represented upon it, with much the same Ornaments as the Emperors.

IN a Word, the Good Sense and Politeness of the Conquered, soon got the better of the Conquerors, especially where Arts and Sciences were concern'd.

* See for this the *Novelle of Justinian*, Coll. 2. Tit. 1. Nov. 7. Tit. 2. Nov. 8. & *alibi*. That the Titles of *Gloriosissimi, Illustrissimi, &c.* were apply'd as well to the *Prætors, Quæstors* and the Ordinary Judges, as the Emperors themselves: And even their *Chartularies* or Secretaries, were stiled *Excelsi* and *Magnificentissimi*, as in the same *Novella*, Tit. 2. Nov. 8. cap. 7. *Magnificentissimo Chartulario, &c.*

† *Solidi ex auro, Denarii ex argento.*

As this Conformity in Manners drew on an Association and Confederacy, it was much increased by the Conversion of the *Barbarians* to the Christian Faith, who now began to reverence the Bishops and Priests as Holy Men, whom they before admir'd for their Learning and Abilities; and from thence, the *Romans* entertain'd better Thoughts of, and obey their Conquerors with greater cheerfulness.

BUT still, they were Two different Nations in Language, Habit, and Customs; which *Distinction* seems to have lasted in *France*, through the Two first Races of their Kings; but it chiefly appear'd in their Laws: And as it was incumbent on the Magistrate, to render Justice to every Man, according to the Law under which he was Born, or had made Choice of, (for that was allow'd;) it was thought advisable, to reduce the Laws, or rather the Customs of the *Barbarians* into Writing.

THESE Laws are still extant, in a Volume entitl'd, *A Code of the Ancient Laws* †; containing those of the *Visi-*

† By Frederick Lindenbrogius.

dict of *Theodosius* King of *Italy*, the
 of the *Burgundians*, the *Salick* and
German (which are properly the Laws
 of the *Franks*;) the Law of the *Germans*,
 of the Inhabitants of *Alsacia* and
 the *Upper Palatinate*; the Laws of the
Franks, *Saxons*, *English* and *Frisons*;
 the Law of the *Lombards*, (which are
 more considerable than the rest;) the
 of *Charlemagne*, and the Con-
 stitutions of the Kings of *Naples* and
Sicily.

It would be an endless Labour to give
 a particular Account of each of these
 Laws: I shall therefore confine my self
 to those that have the nearest Relation
 to *France*; observing by the way, that
 there are none of them, even those made
 for the most distant Nations, but may be
 of some use, either in History or the Ci-
 vil Law; many of them being lick'd
 into the Shape they are now in by the
 Command of the *French* Kings. Besides,
 all those *Northern* People, swarming from
 the same Hive, and keeping a frequent
 Correspondence together, observ'd a great
 Conformity of Manners, as before is re-
 mark'd.

I shall speak of these Laws, according to the Order of Time wherein they were committed to Writing, that is, as the several Nations were conquer'd and establish'd.

*Laws of
the Visi-
goths.*

THOSE of the greatest Antiquity, are the Laws of the *Visigoths*, who possess'd *Spain*, and a great part of *Aquitain* in *Gaul*. And as their Kingdom was the first establish'd; so it seems, their Laws were written before any of the other *Barbarians*.

THEY were first digested by *Evarix*, who began his Reign in 466. but being adapted only to the *Gothick* Constitution, his Son *Alarick* commanded *Avien* his Chancellor, to abridge the *Theodosian* Code for the use of the *Romans*, which he published at *Aire* in *Gascony*. This Abridgment *Avien* illustrated with Notes, by way of Gloss; or at least, put his Name to them for their greater Credit; for we have no sufficient Proof that he was the Author of them. However, we may depend, that this Abridgment was authoriz'd by the Bishops and Nobles in 506; and was design'd to comprehend all the *Roman* Law then in use, which was
taken,

as we have observ'd, both out of the *Three Codes*, and the Writings of the *Continents*.

ANOTHER *Abstract* was afterwards made of this *Code*, consisting only of *Avien's* Remarks, with the Title of *Scintilla*.

THE *Gothick* Law being much enlarged by succeeding Kings, when sufficient Provision was made for most Cases, it was put into *Twelve Books*, in imitation, as some say, of *Justinian's Code*, altho' there is no resemblance in the Disposition of the Materials; and it was ordained, That this Collection should be the only Law observed by the Subjects of the *Gothick* Kings, of what Nation soever they were.

By this means, the *Roman* Law came to be extinct in *Spain*, or rather blended with the *Gothick*: For it was from the *Romans*, they took the greatest Part of what was added to their own Antient Laws. This Collection was called the *Book of the Gothick Laws*; and King *Exila*, who reigned till 701. about Twelve Years before the *Moors* invaded *Spain*, got it confirm'd by the Bishops in the Sixteenth Council of *Toledo*, held in the

Year 693. It has the Names of several Kings prefix'd; but all since *Recaredus*, who was their first Catholick King.

THE Laws in use before, were called the *Antient Laws*, but without the Sanction of any King's Name, not even of *Evarix*; and probably they were all suppress'd in Detestation of *Arianism*. These Antient Laws separately taken, bear a great Analogy with those of the other *Barbarians*; and comprehend all the *Gothick* Customs, reduced into Writing by order of King *Evarix*; but considered with the Improvements they receiv'd, are undoubtedly the most Copious, as well as most Wholesome, of all the Laws in use among the Barbarous Nations, and point out the Judicial Forms observed in *Justinian's* Time, better than his own Books. This is the Ground-work of the *Spanish* Laws, and it prevail'd in *Languedoc*, long after the Dissolution of the *Gothick* Government there, as is manifest by the Second Council of *Troyes*, held under Pope *John* the Eighth, in the Year 878.

Laws of
the Bur-
gundians.

THE *Burgundian* Laws were reform'd by *Gondebaud*, one of their last Kings, and published at *Lions*, the Twenty ninth of *March*, 501. the Second Year of his Reign;
and

and from his Name they are called *Gom-*
beur, altho' he was not the first Inven-
 tion, as he himself confesses: And to
 confirm it, *Gregory de Tours* says, *Gonde-*
baud made more gentle Laws, to pro-
 tect the *Romans* from being misus'd by
 the *Burgundians*. There are some *Addenda*
 which up to 520. or thereabouts,
 run Twelve Years before the Expira-
 tion of the *Burgundian* Government.

THIS Law of *Gondebaud* makes mention
 of the *Roman Law*: From whence 'tis
 plain, the Name of *Barbarian* was then
 no Reflection, since the *Burgundians* them-
 selves, for whose sake it was made, are
 therein so call'd, by way of Distinction
 from the *Romans*. But as the Countries
 under the Dominion of the *Burgundians*,
 were near a Fourth Part of *France*, so no
 doubt, this was ingrafted into the Body
 of the *French* Laws.

As to the *Salick Law*, which was pe-
 culiar to the *Franks*, the Preface thereto Law of the Franks.
 says, it was wrote * before they pass'd the

This is very much doubted, and directly
 contradicted by our *English* Historians. *Vide infra.*

Vide the
Notes ante

Rhine; and the † Places of their Meetings, with the Names of the Four || Sages who were its Authors, are therein mention'd: And tho' the Veracity of this History is called in question, I thought it the safest way to stick to the Edition we have, without taking the Pains to examine, whether this Law was *then* first digested or projected.

It is therein said, to have received its Authority under *Childebert* and *Clotharins*, Sons of *Clovis*: And it expressly declares, that every thing in the antient Customs of the *Franks* relishing of Paganism, should thereby be utterly abolished.

Of this Law we have Two Copies, the same in Sense, but very different in Words. The Oldest, which was also the first printed, has in most Articles some Barbarous Words, denoting the Place of

† In Places called *Salchaim*, *Bodohaim*, *Widohaim*, on the other Side of the *Rhine*. [See the Preface to the *Salick Law*.]

|| Having out of many chosen Four, namely, *Wifogastus*, *Bodogastus*, *Salogastus*, *Widogastus*. [See the Preface to the *Salick Law*, and Quære if these Names are not forg'd.]

every

particular Decision, or the Sum of
 nes adjudged upon each Case, as
 our *Vaudelin*, Official of *Tournay*,
 hands it in his Treatise of the Sa-

other Copy, is the Edition of
gne, and is in the Code of the
 Laws; at the End of which are
ddenda, intituled, The Decrees of
 and *Clothair*; being the Result
 Solemn Meetings, held Annually
 on the first of *March*.

THE

† These Annual Solemn Meetings seem to have
 been in Nature of our *Parliaments*, and were gene-
 rally practised by most of the Northern Nations :
 Thus here in *England*, antecedent to the Conquest,
 the Practice was to hold a General Solemn Assem-
 bly, called *Populi Convventus*, or *Folk-mote*, twice
 yearly, viz. on the Kalends of *May*, and the Ka-
 lends of *October*, wherein Grievances were redress'd,
 and Laws and Provisions made for the good Go-
 vernment of the Kingdom; and in them were
 chosen and constituted, all the great Officers of
 the Kingdom, both Civil and Military, as appears
 in the Laws of *Edward the Confessor*, Cap. 35.

Whence which, we may observe, That these So-
 lemn Annual Assemblies, were fixed and certain,
 and did not depend on the King's Writ of Sum-
 mons, or other Royal Mandate, (as *Parliaments*
 now are), and therefore the *Statute* of *Ed. I.* Cap. 1.
Parliaments shall be held twice Yearly;
 to respect this antient Practice, and the
 common

Laws of
the Ri-
puarians.

THE *Riparian*, is in a manner
thing else but a Repetition of the
Law: Both were made for the *U*
Franks; the first, 'tis thought,
People inhabiting between the *L*
the *Meuse*; and the latter, for t
tween the *Meuse* and the *Rhine*.
rick, being at *Chalons* upon *Ma*
fied the Laws of the *Riparians*,
and *Bavarians*, all under his C
to be reform'd and corrected,
as far as they were repugnant to
Christian Religion. After him, *Childebert*,
and then *Clothair* made farther Amend-
ments; and lastly, *Dagobert* renew'd, and
with the Assistance of Four || Eminent
Men, brought them to that Perfection in
which they are.

Laws of the
Barbari-
ans in ge-
neral.

THESE were the Laws of the *Barba-
rians*, which properly relate to the pre-

common Custom of the Realm before the Con-
quest: And the following Words, [*or oftner if need
be*] only gave the King a Power to call other
Parliaments by *Summons* whenever the necessary
Affairs of the Kingdom required it.

|| *Claudian, Chaulus, Indomagnus, Agilulfus.* [Vid.
Cod. Leg. Antiq. Edit. per Fred. Lyndenbrogium.
Prefat. Leg. Ripuar.]

sent

ance; and it may not be amiss, having told you what is most remarkable in the Original of each of them) to touch briefly upon the whole, and give a general *Idea* of their Tenour or Contents, and their Style or Method, in order to know of what use and service they may be to Us.

We must not let the Word *Law* deceive, and persuade us, that these were the Result of Learned Mens Consultations, or the Fruits of a consummate Prudence, as the Laws of the *Athenians* and *Lacedemonians*: No, they were, properly speaking, no more than Customs that obtain'd among the People, and were afterwards approv'd and recorded by their wisest and most experienc'd Men, in their judicial Decisions, and followed by the rest in all their Judgments. This is plain, from the antient Copies of the *Salick Law*, which nominate in barbarous Terms, the Places where such Judgments were given, and sometimes the Quality or Nature of the Fact.

These Laws, notwithstanding, were afterwards digested into Order, by Publick Authority, and had not only the *Fiat* of the Kings, but Approbation of the People,

ple, at least of their Representatives : Therefore the *Salick Law* is called the *Covenant* or † *Treaty of the Salick Law* ; and that of the *Burgundians*, has the Names of Thirty || Earls to it, who promised for themselves and their Descendants to keep and observe it.

Their Com-
pacts.

THE Matters they chiefly treat of, are Criminal, and such as are most incident to Barbarous and Savage People, as Robberies, Murders, Injuries, Insults, and all manner of Violence : There is little said of Successions, Inheritances, or Contracts.

† *Pactum, Tractatus.*

|| Sig. *Abgaris*, Com.
Sig. *Aunemundi*, Com.
Sig. *Unnani*, Com.
Sig. *Hildeulfi*, Com.
Sig. *Hildegerni*, Com.
Sig. *Ufgildi*, Com.
Sig. *Walesti*, Com.
Sig. *Audemundi*, Com.
Sig. *Audabari*, Com.
Sig. *Amgathe*, Com.*
Sig. *Auderic*, Com.
Sig. *Aunemundi*, Com.
Sig. *Willimeri*, Com.
Sig. *Conigiseli*, Com.
Sig. *Comarici*, Com.
Sig. *Wallacrii*, Com.

Sig. *Sigonis*, Com.
Sig. *Fredemandi*, Com.
Sig. *Wanabarii*, Com.
Sig. *Wilfilæ*, Com.
Sig. *Sigiswoldi*, Com.
Sig. *Sonie*, Com.
Sig. *Godemundi*, Com.
Sig. *Widemeris*, Com.
Sig. *Wadabameris*, Com.
Sig. *Silvani*, Com.
Sig. *Gomæ*, Com.
Sig. *Fastilæ*, Com.
Sig. *Suldi*, Com.
Sig. *Gundeulfi*, Com.
Sig. *Offini*, Com.
Sig. *Walarimi*, Com.

the Laws of such of those Nations, had been lately conquer'd, and converted to the Faith, I mean the *German*, *Saxons*, and *Bavarians*, there are particular Punishments assign'd for Rebellion and Sacrilege: From whence we may gather, that neither the Civil, nor Ecclesiastical Magistrates, were secure from the Inroads of the *Barbarians*.

SOMETHING there is also to be discovered of the Form of their Judgments; They met together in numerous Assemblies, at which all Persons of Distinction were bound to appear, upon certain Penalties, as the Laws of the *Bavarians* declare. The Proofs made use of, were rather *viva voce*, than by written Evidence, because the Art of Writing, was then unknown; and in default of due Proof, they granted the Combat, or a Trial by the *Elements*. The Combat, was a *Duel*, fought either between the Parties themselves, or their

Surely Writing was then known and practis'd. See hereafter another Reason assign'd; and indeed the best Reason seems to be, because the Truth would better appear *viva voce*, than by written Evidence. [See Sir Matt. Hale's *History of the Law*, Cap. ult.]

Cod. Leg. Antiq. *L.B. Baiuvariorum*, Tit. 15: *Da iudicia fiant per Kalendas, &c.*

Cham-

Champions, within Lists appointed by the Judges. The Trial by the Elements, was either *Scalding Water*, into which the accused put his Arm a certain depth; or *Cold Water*, into which he was plung'd, to see if he would sink: And sometimes the Trial was made by a *Red-hot Iron*, which he was to carry so many Yards, in his bare Hand: Then it was bound and seal'd up; and after some Days, unbound, to see what Effect the Fire had produc'd.

THESE Trials lasted many Ages, and were so currently received, that they were call'd *God's Judgments*; and for that Reason perform'd with Church-Ceremonies; the Forms of which, and Prayers used on such Occasions, and the Exorcisms of *Fire and Water*, are still to be seen: So Ignorant were they in those Times, as to believe, that God would work a Miracle in favour of Innocence; and the many Instances of Success mention'd in History, helped to confirm them in that Belief. However, 'tis certain they were not able to invent a better, or more convenient Method to determine in Cases of Intricacy, and where their own Skill failed.

is called in the Canons † *Vulgar*
Purgatio, and ever condemned by the
 Council of *Rome*, notwithstanding the In-
 fluence of Common Practice: 'Tis called
Vulgar to distinguish it from *Canonical*
Purgatio, which was done only by *Oath*.

The Nature of the Penalties inflicted
 by these Laws is no less remarkable than
 the rest, most of them being Pecuniary;
 Or, where the Convict was not able to
 pay, a Corporal Punishment: Scarce any
 were Capital, but Crimes of State. Those
 Penalties were called *Compositions*; being
 only a Tax of Costs and Damages, made
 with surprising Exactness. There are an
 Hundred and sixty four Articles in that
 of the *Frisons* only; which is one of the

† These kinds of *Vulgar Purgation* were in use
 in *England* till the time of *Hen. III.* They were
 called *Fire and Water Ordeals*. *Queen Emma*, Mo-
 ther of *Edward the Confessor*, was tried by the First,
 blindfold over a certain Number of hot
 Plough-shares, with a Success worthy of
 Chastity. An Example of the Second kind,
 gave in the Reign of *William II.* who suspect-
 ed a Company of Fellows to have stolen his
 Crown, enjoined them to carry burning Irons; which
 they did without Hurt. And the King being told
 they replied, *Quid est id? Deus est justus Iudex;*
qui deinceps hoc crediderit. Eadmerus.

Short-

shortest : Tis properly, a Tariff of all kinds of Wounds, in which the several Parts of the Body are enumerated, and even those which ought to have been overlook'd, and every way in which they may be hurt, set down, with the several Dimensions of each Wound. For Example ; the Maiming of a Hand is taxed in so many different Articles ; as, the Fourth, Third, Second, or First Finger cut off ; and a difference made in the Penalty, if it be a Thumb, Fore-Finger, Middle-Finger, and so of the rest : Nay, the several Joints of each Finger have their several Fines. They also distinguish, if the Part be entirely cut off, or hanging to the rest of the Body ; and if a Wound only, then the Length, Breadth and Depth are fully described. Among the rest, there is a particular Tax upon Wounds of the Head, when the Scull is broken, which seems very extraordinary ; but yet is repeated in many of their Laws : It is, * that if a Piece of the Scull be broken off, big enough to make a Shield sound,

* *Si quis in Capite, vel in quocunque libet membro plagatus fuerit, & os exinde exierit quod super viam 12 pedum in scuto jactum sonaverit 36 sol. factum ejus culp. jud.* [See the Ripuarian Laws, Cap. 68. de Offe, &c.]

being cast into it at the Distance of twelve
Paces, the Offender shall pay such a

PROBRIOUS Words are tax'd with
the same Exactness: And hence we may
learn what Words were accounted infam-
ous in those times.

Some may think it hardly worth while
now a-days to take notice of several
things that are particulariz'd in those
Laws. There is provision made to punish
such as shall stop another in a Road;
such as uncover a † Woman to affront
her; those who dig up a Dead Corpse
to plunder it; and him who skins ano-
ther Man's Horse. In short, there are
particular Articles against stealing all sorts
of Beasts, down to Dogs, the different
Kinds of which are therein specified.
I thought it would not be altogether use-
less, to enter into this brief Detail, how

*Si quæ libera famina virgo vadit in itinere suo
per Villas, & obviavit eam aliquis, & per rap-
torem denudat caput ejus, cum vi. Sol. componat; -----
Et si ejus Vestimenta levaverit, ut usque ad
genitalia denudet, cum vi. Solid. componat; & si eam
denudaverit ut genitalia ejus appareant vel posteriora,
cum vii. Solid. componat. [Lex Alman. Tit. 53. De
no. quæ mulierem, &c.*

low soever it seems, in order to give some *Idea* of those Laws, as well as a Notion of the People for whom they were ordained.

Their Style. THE Style in which they are wrote, is so plain and succinct, that they would be easily understood, if they were not full of Barbarous Terms, which have crept in, either for want of proper *Latin* Words, or by way of Explanation: And this is another clear Proof of my Assertion, that *these Barbarians wrote nothing in their own Language*; for certainly, if they had, those Laws might have been much more

† The Reason why the German Nations did not Write their Laws, was (says *Spelman*) because they were originally a Grecian Colony, coming out of *Lacedemon*, and the Territory of *Sparta*; where *Lycurgus* being King, ordained, That their Laws should not be Written, but Imprinted in every Man's Memory: And therefore they were made Short and Summary. [*Spelm. of the Terms*, Cap. 8.]

And Monsieur *Pezron*, in his Treatise of the *Antiquities of Nations*, Lib. 1. c. 17. has with great probability of Truth, endeavour'd to prove, That the *Spartans* or *Lacedemonians* originally sprung from the *Celtæ*: From whence also, both the *Ancient Gauls*, and our *Britons* were descended. He, in the same Treatise, shews their Analogy or Conformity in Manners, Customs and Laws; and particularly, of having their Laws unwritten, and preserving them only by means of their *Druids*, &c.

commodiously wrote in the *German* Language, than in *Latin*, stuffed with *German* Terms. Yet, it appears there was Writing in the *Teutonick* Tongue, an Age or two after these Laws were digested. For not to mention the Ancient *Version* of the Gospels, of which there are some Fragments in the Inscriptions of *Gruter*, we have the Laws of the *Anglo-Saxons*, wrote in their *Vulgar* Tongue, from the Beginning of the Reign of † King *Ina*, in 712. to the End of that of *Cnutus the Dane*, in the Year 1035. These, by the way, have a great Affinity to the rest of the *Barbarian* Laws; and were also enacted in the Assemblies of their *Bishops* and *Elders*.

† We have also lately Published, by the Reverend Mr. *Wilkins*, the Laws of divers *Saxon* Kings, antecedent to those of King *Ina*: viz. The Laws of *Æthelbirt*; who began to reign, as *Bede* says, Anno 613. or according to the *Saxon* Chronology, 618. Those of King *Lorbarius*; who, as *Bede* says, began Anno 673. or as others, 675. And those of King *Witred*, who began about the Year 691.* All which were Kings of *Kent*, before the Union of the *Heptarchy*, under King *Egbert*. And no doubt, other *Saxon* and *British* Princes before these, Published divers *Laws*; as may be Instanced from the Laws of *Ælfred the Great*, which as we hear, will speedily be published by the Reverend Dr. *Wotton*.

THE *Gothick* Laws are in a purer *Latin* Dialect, according to the Learning of those Times, than any of the rest; that is, they have fewer Barbarous Expressions altho' more Phrases and superfluous Words.

*Law of
the Franks
under the
First Race.*

THUS 'tis easily known, what Law were in force in *France*, under the King of the First Race. The *Franks*, who were Masters, observ'd the *Salick*; the *Burgundians*, the *Gombette*; the *Goths*, who settled in great Numbers in the Provinces on the other side of the *Loire*, followed the *Gothick* Laws, and all the rest, the *Roman*; which the Church-Men universally follow'd, of what Nation soever they were: 'Tis true, there were few Ecclesiasticks, but what were *Romans*; but had it been otherwise, their Interest was to cultivate that Law, for the sake of the great Privileges, and Immunities granted them by the Constitutions of the Emperors. Besides this, they were obliged to obey the *Canon Law*; that is, such Rules of the Councils, as are compris'd in the Ancient Code of the Canons of the *Universal Church*, and some Decisions of the Popes, who were often consulted by the Bishops.

THE *Barbarians*, and even the *Franks* themselves, were frequently forced to have recourse to the *Roman Law*, because their own was deficient in many Cases. Thus, *Isidore* says, the *Franks* were directed by the *Roman Law* in their Contracts and Marriages. And *Aimoinus* relates, that in the time of *Dagobert*, the Children of *Gunthegeffe*, Duke of *Aquitaine*, were, in pursuance of the *Roman Law*, excluded from his Inheritance, for not revenging their Fathers Death. Besides, it is natural to suppose, that those who drew up the Publick Instruments and Writings, being all Clerks or Monks, as *Marculfus*, whose Formularies we have, adapted them as much they could to their Law and Style: So that the *Roman Law* was universally observed through all *France*, under the Kings of the First Race, and never thrown aside, but when it cross'd some *Barbarian Law* in Force.

Now whoever has a mind to see an Abridgement of these Laws in their greatest Lustre, together with the State of *France* under the First Race, their manner of administering Justice, and Government; let him look into the History wrote by *M. Cordemoi*, at the End of King *Dagobert's* Reign.

*Laws of the
Franks
under the
Second
Race.*

THE Emperor *Charlemagne*, having re-
united all the Conquests of the *Franks*,
Burgundians, *Goths* and *Lombards* under his
Empire, suffered each Nation to enjoy their
own Laws; and had them all reviv'd, through
his great Care that every thing should be
administred according to Rule and good
Order: Perhaps, 'tis to him we are in-
debted for those Copies that have been
transmitted unto us.

IN the Year 788, he order'd the *Theo-
dorian* Code to be Copy'd and Publish'd,
according to the Edition of *Alarick*, King
of the *Visigoths*; and by means of this
Edition, we have all the *Theodosian* Code,
or rather, an Abridgment of all it con-
tain'd. For, comparing it with that pub-
lish'd by *Theodosius* himself, which was
much larger, we have but half of it. In
the Year 798, *Charlemagne* had the *Salick*
Law transcribed, and added several Arti-
cles thereto: In 803, *Louis the Debonair*
likewise made some Additions. So that
the same Law was in use, as well under
the Kings of the Second Race, as of the
First: The only Addition to them, was
the Capitulars, which are General Laws,
and deserve carefully to be examined.

IN order to which, we must understand ^{the Capitulars.} the Kings of the First Race, for many Years, held a great Assembly on the First Day of *March*; in which, all ^{vide antè.} Publick Affairs were debated, and Mutual Presents made between the Prince and People. This they call'd *the Field of Mars*: A Name long before in use among the *Roman* Emperors, to signify a Military Congress or Meeting. The *Franks* held them in the open Air, for want of Buildings large enough to hold them; or rather, because it was customary among the *Germans* in their own Countrey, where they had no other Dwellings but Caverns and scatter'd Huts. It was, probably, this Custom of Meeting in the Field to hold these Assemblies, that fix'd the time of keeping them to the End of the Winter, which had confin'd them to their Habitations; and before Summer, that they might employ it wholly to execute the Resolutions of the General Council: For War was the Principel Subject of their Debates.

THIS Field of *Mars*, through the Indolence and Inactivity of the succeeding Dronish

* From the Roman *Campus Martius*.

Kings, dwindled into a mere Ceremony; and *Pepin* changed the Day to the First of *May*. After his Time, it was uncertain, since the Annual Meetings were regularly kept up.

THIS Assembly consisted of the Chiefs in Church and State, as of *Bishops*, *Abbots* and *Barons*; and I am apt to believe, that all those that were *Franks*, had a Right of coming to it. The Question was propounded by the King; who, after it had been freely debated, pronounced the Definitive Sentence or Resolution. The Result of these Meetings was put into Writing, and every Bishop and Earl obliged to take a Copy from the *Chancellor*, for the Direction of their Inferior Officers, and that no Man might pretend Ignorance. As the Questions and Resolutions were put into a short Form, under several Heads, they were called *Chapters*; and Collections of many Chapters, *Capitulars* †.

THE *Capitulars*, I think, ought to be distinguished according to their Subjects: Those relating to Church-Affairs, which

† See the Preface of Monsieur *Baluze* upon this Subject.

are very numerous, are really *Canons*; as being Rules establish'd by Bishops lawfully assembled: Therefore most part of those Assemblies, are reckon'd as Councils. Those Capitulars which treat of Secular, but General Matters, are truly *Laws*: And such as refer to particular Persons and Cases, are to be consider'd only as Private Rules.

WE have still a great many Capitulars of the Kings of the Two first Races; from *Childebert* Son of *Clovis*, to *Charles the Simple*: The greatest part are of *Charlemagne* and *Louis the Debonair*; which, till now, were no where to be found, but in the Collection of Abbot * *Ansgise*, and *Benedict* || the Deacon. At present, we have the Capitulars entire, in the same Order of Writing and Time, as they were drawn up in each Assembly. They were thus published by M. *Baluze*, in 1677. with an ample Preface, and very Learned Remarks on the whole. He hath also put in its proper Place, viz. at the End of the Capitulars of *Louis the Debonair*, *Ansgise's* and *Benedict's* Compilation. It is

* Afterwards Bishop of Sens.

|| Deacon of the Church of Mayence.

divided into Seven Books: The Four first, were composed by *Ansgise* in 827. for the better Preservation (as he says) of the Capitulars, which were in loose Sheets. In the next Two first Books, he places those of *Charlemagne*: The First contains Ecclesiastical, and the Second Secular Matters. In the next Two Books, the Capitulars of *Louis the Debonair* and his Son (*viz.*) *Lothaire*: In the Third, the Capitulars relating to Ecclesiastical, and in the Fourth Book, those relating to Secular Matters. The other Three, were compiled by *Benedict*, Deacon of the Church of *Mentz*, about 846. and contain more Capitulars of the same Princes, omitted by *Ansgise*, either designedly or for want of knowing where to find them, and which *Benedict* recover'd in several Places; particularly, the Archives of his own Church †.

THERE are just Grounds to accuse either *Benedict*, or those whose Memoirs he hath compil'd, of not having been so exact as they ought, in their Choice of what Materials they have inserted in those Capitulars: For at the Beginning of the Sixth Book, we find Fifty three Articles taken

† *Moyence*.

from the Law of *Moses*, which certainly did not suit with either *Charlemagne's* Time or Countrey. After these Seven Books, are some Capitulars of the Emperor *Louis the Debonair*, concerning Ecclesiastical Regulations, discovered since *Benedict's* Collection, and divided into Four *Adenda*; the First of which, merely concerns the Monastick Discipline.

THE Authority of the Capitulars, must needs have been very great, being Enacted by the Advice of the Nobles, and Consent of the whole Nation; so that they were in force throughout the whole *French Empire*, that is, almost all over *Europe*: Especially under *Charlemagne*, *Louis the Debonair* and his Children. Besides the Pains taken to inculcate them into the Minds of the People, it was a chief Branch of the Duty of those Ministers called * *Missi Dominici*, to see them duly executed in the Provinces under their Charge. Nay, the Capitulars were a long time after esteemed Laws, as appears by the Letters of *Ives de Chartres*, the Decretals of *Innocent III.* and the Decree of *Gratian*, where-

* A kind of Surveyors or Commissaries, sent by the Prince to inspect the Government of the Provinces.

in many of them are inserted. This was the State of the Law of *France*, under the Second Race of our Kings ; when the Capitulars, the *Salick* Law, and the Laws of each particular People, but especially the *Roman*, were in use.

The Ro-
man Law
under the
Second
Race.

THE Care those Princes took, to preserve the Use of the *Roman* Law, is manifest, by an Article of the Capitulars of *Charles the Bold*, wherein, after the Penalty fix'd upon False Measures, 'tis provided, *That in all the Provinces subject to the Roman Law, the Delinquent should be punish'd according to that Law* ; adding, *That neither He, nor his Predecessors, had ever design'd to Enact any thing repugnant to it* : Which he often repeats in the same Edict. Besides, the *Roman* Law was equally useful to those who were not *Romans*, as under the First Race of our Kings : For the Capitulars, which were the only *New* Laws, contain very little of the Fundamental Maxims and Principles of Law. The greatest part of them relate only to Church-Discipline ; insomuch, that many *Canons* of the Antient Councils, are transcribed among them. Those which concern Temporal Matters, often relate only to Private Cases, for which they were calculated. Others, are plainly but Instructions and Minutes, for the Commissioners

ners sent into the Provinces. The few remaining General Articles, are very defective Laws: They are rather Exhortations to Virtue, than Penal Laws. And as 'tis known, the Authors were Ecclesiasticks, 'tis natural enough to think, they did not sufficiently distinguish between the Style used in Laws, which command and force Obedience, and that of Charitable Exhortations and Moral Precepts. So that it was necessary to have recourse to the *Roman Law*, in Matters of Right; especially Contracts and Conditions: For most of their Disputes were about Vassals.

HERE follows a Memorable Instance of the Laws used in *France*, under the Second Race of our Kings. *Adrivaldus* Monk of the Monastery of *St. Benedict upon Loire*, who Flourish'd in the Time of *Charles the Bald*, tells us, That there was a Dispute between the *Patrons* of that Convent, and that of *St. Dennis*, concerning some Vassals: To decide which, a Plea was held before One *Bishop*, and One * *Earl*

An Earl, in the Signification of Count or Comte, was not originally a Degree of Dignity, as it is now, but of Office and Judicature. [See *History of Feuds, &c.* c. 10.] Or rather, all Degrees imply'd an Office annex'd thereto. In the same Manner, the Bishops usurp'd a Lay-Jurisdiction in this Kingdom; and were Judges in Trials of Criminal, as well as Civil Matters. [Vid. *Concil. Brit.* 182. *Anno* 693. vid. etiam *Leges Ethelstani.*]

on

on the King's Part, and several Judges and Doctors of Law ; who at the First Meeting could come to no Resolution ; because the Judges of the *Salick* Law, were unacquainted with the Course of the Ecclesiastical Courts which proceeded according to the *Roman* Law : This oblig'd the King's Ministers to appoint another Meeting at *Orleans* where, besides the Judges, several Doctors of Law, both of that Province, and the *Gallinois*, were order'd to attend. And after all, it ended in a *Duel* between the Witnesses.

THIS Piece of History, shews, the *Roman* and *Salick* Laws, were at that time both in Force ; that the Church obey'd the *Roman* Law ; that there were Persons, who made it their Business to read Publick Law-Lectures ; and that some of them then lived in *Orleans* : That the Prince's Ministers, were Presidents of the Court ; and that sometimes, the Witnesses were order'd to end the Dispute by *Combat*.

WHAT I have hitherto treated of, is what I call the *Antient French Law*.

The New
Law.

IN order to understand, how the *New Law* was modell'd and introduc'd, we must first examine, how the *Old* was reduced
into

into Custom; and how the Study of the *Roman Law*, came to be revived. The Origine of all Customs is obscure; because they differ from Laws, only in, not being committed to Writing: So that, if ever they are put into Writing, 'tis not till after they have been established by long Practice. But there is a particular Reason, why the Origine of the *French Customs* is difficult to be traced, because they first grew into Authority in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries; which is the darkeft Period of Time in all our History. But this is what I Conjecture.

ABOUT the End of the Second, and Beginning of the Third Race of our Kings, both *Italy* and *Gaul* fell into Anarchy, and a General Confusion. Those Troubles were first occasion'd, by the unhappy Division between the Sons of *Louis the Debonair*; and were greatly increas'd by the Hostilities and Ravages of the *Hungarians*, and *Normans*, who gave the final Blow to the poor Remains of the *Roman Spirit* and Customs.

But this Misfortune, was carry'd to the utmost Extremity by Private Wars: not only betwixt the Dukes and Barks, but generally, all that had any Castle or

of Place of Strength for Retreat: For even
 they appear'd in Arms; even the very
 Bishops with their Clergy, and Abbots with
 their Monks, to secure themselves from
 being Murder'd; when they found their
 Prayers, and Ecclesiastical Censures inef-
 fectual.

THESE Barbarings were agreeable to the
 Ancient Customs of the *Barbarians*; the
 Seeds of which appear in their very Laws:
 For besides the *Duel*, one of their ordi-
 nary means of Decision in doubtful Cases,
 they encourag'd the Law of deadly *Feuds*;
 which allow'd the Kindred of the Deceas'd,
 to kill the Murtherer where-ever they met
 him; except in certain Places, as * the
 Church, Royal Palace, Publick Assembly,
 the Army, or in his way to any of them:
 For upon those Occasions, the Persons
 liable to this Revenge were protected.

* *Homo si quis pacem habeat in Ecclesia in domo
 sua, ad Ecclesiam redeundo, de Ecclesia redeundo; ad
 placitum eius in loco isto redeundo, qui hanc pacem
 effregerit occiderit, novies xxx. sol. com-
 ponat. Si in domo occiderit, novies xii. sol. componat ad
 partem suam. II. Add. sapientum Leg. Frisonum,
 Tit. 1.*

Thus one Murder, tho' accidentally, often produc'd a Train of many Murders. And 'tis likely, that this was the Reason why the Law did not inflict the Punishment of Death upon Murderers, but only a Pecuniary Mult, or rather Compensation of Damages, which were call'd *Compagnies*. For it was left to the Choice of the Kindred, either to revenge themselves by the Death of the Murderer, or to satisfy'd with a Fine. However, these certain Family-Quarrels were universally established in *France*, in the Tenth Century.

As it is difficult to bring to a due Temper, the Minds of a People once exasperated; all that the Zealous Endeavours of the Church-Men, and best of Princes could at first do, was only to obtain a Cessation of Arms for certain Days; that is, every Week from *Wednesday* Evening, to the *Monday* Morning following: During which time, all Acts of Hostility were forbidden. Besides, for certain Persons were never to be ill-treated, as Priests, Pilgrims, and Day-Labourers, upon Pain of Excommunication: And this was what they call'd *God's Truce*, which was afterwards confirm'd and enlarged.

One may easily imagine, that during their Troubles, Ignorance and Injustice insensibly abolish'd the Antient Laws; and that being much disregarded, they grew almost forgot. Thus the *French* fell almost into the State of *Barbarians*, who have as yet, neither Laws nor Civil Government: *They*, in this respect, *they* were more unhappy, in having retained some Remembrance of Arts; which they chiefly employ'd in Forging Arms, and Building Fortifications: So that they had many more ways of doing one another Mischief, than mere Savages have. They were more ignorant of Good than Evil; and had all the Ferocity of their Ancestors, without their open Simplicity and Innocence.

HENCE came our old Fabulous Stories of *Robbers*, that insulted the Weak and Defenceless; block'd up the Roads, and interrupted Trade and Commerce; and of *Knight-Errants*, who went up and down in defence of the Innocent, and to succour distressed Damsels. But methinks, the Authors of these Romances, were not guilty of any Novel Inventions; since they only copied the real Characters of those times, embellishing them with Giants, Goblins, and Fairies.

BUT

BUT notwithstanding this Confusion, there still remain'd some Forms of Justice; for all Disputes were not determin'd by Force. The *Nobles* and *Roturiers*, or *Plebeians*, were under distinct Jurisdictions. I use those Appellations, tho' of later Date, because the Degrees were then known, tho' not the Names: And I place the Peasants, Artisans, and the rest of the Freemen and Vassals, which compose the Body of the Common-People, under the Denomination of *Roturiers*. These were judged by the Nobles, that is, the Knights, and other Men of Power, who began about this time to erect themselves into Lords, and usurp'd the Publick Authority; of which, they had before, at most, but the executive Part: For as long as the Royal Power was in its full Meridian, particularly in the Line of *Charlemagne*, there was no other Lord but the King; nor any Justice administred but in his Name, or of those put in Authority under him. But in the troublesome Times, every Man took upon him the Prerogative of judging, as well as of raising War, and raising Taxes upon the People.

The Foundation of this Government, was in all likelihood, owing to the Dominant Power over Vassals: For France

was full of that sort of Vassals, who were accounted Parcel of the Lord's Land and Inheritance; and it was a great Matter in respect of them, to change their Private into Publick Authority. I am of Opinion, that many Freemen were confounded with these Vassals; either by their Contingency in order for Protection in this time of General Hostility, or by downright Force. For in the Capitulars, there is frequent mention made of the Oppression of Free Free Men. The Ringleaders of this Oppression, were, probably, the *Earls*; that is, the Governors of Considerable Towns, who were before, in right of their Offices, invested with a Power of Jurisdiction.

THESE Lords, from what Spring soever their Power flow'd, administer'd Justice, either in Person, or by Officers chosen out of their own Domesticks: Their Stewards were made *Seneschals*; their Intendants and Receivers, *Bailiffs* and *Provosts*; and their *Marshals*, *Serjeants*. Nay, in looking further back, we shall find, that the *Seneschals* and other Officers, were not only Domesticks, but sometimes Slaves; for the same Law, amongst those Slaves valuable to the Lord, names the *Mayor*, *Capitaneus*, and *Seneschal*; and the *German* Law, the *Seneschal* and *Mareschal*: But these

these Names were not given to Publick Officers, till the Third Race of our Kings.

THIS Authority was Sovereign; and Justice render'd in a Summary Way. The Penalties they inflicted, were Cruel: For it was common to put out * Eyes, and to cut off a Foot or a Hand: Whence it is that the Acts of those Times so frequently mention *Mutilation*; and it seems, that these Punishments were Arbitrary.

THESE Nobles, who thus sat in Judgment upon the *Roturiers*, were subject so to the Judgment of their Superiours. A *Knight* or *Castellan*, for Example, was subject to the Jurisdiction of that *Earl* whom Vassal he was; and the Earl, in order to Judge the Knight, summon'd the Peers of his Court, who were Knights, Vassals of equal Rank among themselves, and the Person under Prosecution. The Earl himself, was one of the Peers of his Lord Paramount's Court; either an *Earl* of greater Power, a *Duke*, or a *King*: And this Subordination, was observed from the

*ne quis occidatur, ne quis caedatur pro
causa, sed eruantur oculi, & amputentur testiculi,
vel aliter, & manent ita quod feriantur, & non
[Dicitur de] [Cathelini Conquestoris.]*

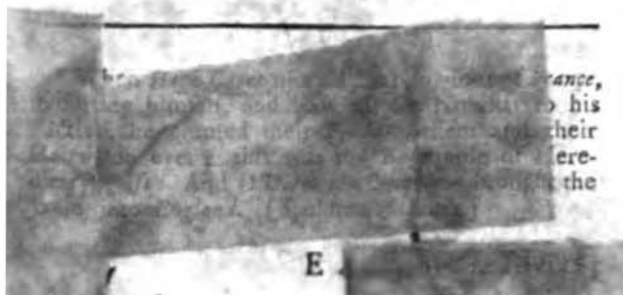
Peasant to the Prince; for the King's own Court, was made up of the Peers of *France*, his chief Vassals.

BUT this Order was not always observ'd, for some of the Nobles, knowing their own Strength, refus'd to obey their Chiefs, who had no other way of doing themselves Justice, but by Force of Arms. The King himself, was many times forc'd to make War, not only against some Peers of *France*, but other inferior Lords. The Abbat *Suger* tells us, that *Louis the Gross* sent an Army against *Bouchard de Montmorency*, in favour of the Abbat of *St. Dennis*; that he Besieg'd *Gournai*, and took it by Storm; that he Defeated the Lord *Puifet en Beauisse*; and at last subdued the Lord of *Montlehery*, who had tir'd out his Father, *Philip the First*, and even stopp'd his Communication between *Paris* and *Orleans*.

ANOTHER way of composing Differences between Great Men was Arbitration, especially when the Church was concerned: And the Writers of that time, as *Fulbert* and *Isidore*, frequently mention those Arbitrators. It seems, that before the Degree of Coordination among Great Men was rais'd, every one look'd upon him-

himself as a Sovereign, whose Disputes were not to be ended but by Victory, or a Treaty of Peace. This irregular way of doing Justice, and this Usurpation of New Jurisdictions, very much contributed towards those Customs whose Origine we are looking after : But several other Rights, introduc'd in these times, had a considerable Share in them. *Fiefs*, * which before were only Grants for Life, became Perpetual and Hereditary. And to these times of Disorder, are justly ascribed the Source of the greatest Part of those Services due from the Tenant to his Lord ; which, as is believed, were settled by Private Agreements or Usurpation.

INDEED, there is no likelihood, that the People should voluntarily invest particular Great Men with so many Rights, prejudicial to their Common Liberty, as are mention'd in most of our Customs ; many of which are still in Force, as in passing of



Rivers; those Rights call'd * *Peage*, † *Travers*, || *Rouage*, ‡ *Barrage*, and many others, as ** *Giste*, †† *Past*, ||| *Logemens*,

* *Peage*.--- A Custom or Toll paid for Passage; which the Lords of Mannors have a Right to demand, within their Jurisdictions.

† *Travers*.--- Much the same as *Peage*. Cross-Toll, Passage-Toll, or Thorough-Toll; called with us *Toll-Travers*.

|| *Rouage*.--- Wheelage, a certain Toll or Imposition upon Wine sold in Grofs, and carried away in Carts: Levied before a Wheel thereof be suffered to stir.

Droit de ‡ *Barrage*.--- A Passage-Toll, so call'd from the Bar or Turnpike where 'tis Levied.

** *Giste*.--- Power to lie at the House of a Tenant, Vassal or Subject, in passing along by it.

†† *Past*.--- The same to require a Meal or Refection of a Tenant or Vassal.

||| *Logemens*.--- An annual Fee due unto some Lords, for the Lodgings their Vassals have in their Castles, in time of War.

Sir Henry Spelman, in his Treatise of Parliaments, says, the same Impositions were in use in England, after the Conquest, and were call'd Colthering.

In Ireland they were termed Cuttings, from the old Word Tallagium.

†† *Furni-*

Fourniture, * *Courvées*, † *Guet*, and || *Garde* ;
the sole Right of † *Ovens*, *Mills* and *Wine-*
presses ; the Prohibition of selling * *Wine*,

Droit de } † † *Fourniture*.---- A Right of demanding
Provision, Implements, or Equipage,
from a Tenant or Vassal.
* *Courvées*.---- A Day's Work due from the
Vassal to his Lord, to be done in Per-
son, or by his Cattle, Plough or Team.
† *Guet*.---- Castle-Guard. As Ward, assigned
unto the Vassals of Lords that build
Castles, are bound in Time of In-
station of War.
|| *Garde*.---- The Wardship of lands due
to the Lord of whom they are held.

Bannalitez { *des fours.*
des moulins.
des pressoirs.

The Lord of a Manor has, by
the Right of Bannalitez, all the
Tithes, such as Corn, &c.
to such a Mill, to be
ground, and all the Wine
within a District, to be
pressed at the same
Press, and all which the
Lord or Owner of such
Oven, Mill, or Wine-
press receives a certain
Toll.

* The Lord of a Manor has, of
himself, half Vassals to sell their
Wine, till they have dispos'd of
their own.

and

and many others of the same kind; which relish very much, either of the Slavery of those on whom they were impos'd, or the Violence of the Imposers.

I cannot say, but they are become Lawful, by Prescription and Approbation of those Princes, who have authoriz'd the Customs: Nay, I am willing to believe, many had a Reasonable Foundation; as, the Re-imbursing a Nobleman the Expence he had been at in building a Bridge or a Causey; or for retaining some Token of that Servitude, from which he had deliver'd his Subjects. Many of them, are the very Conditions on which Estates are convey'd, as the † *Cens*, || *Rentes foncieres*,

† *Cens*--- Rent of Affize, Quit-Rent, Old-Rent, Chief-Rent, the first Pecuniary Charge laid on Conquered Lands, as a Sign and Acknowledgment of the direct Seigniorship of him that grants it. This was impos'd by the Captains and Leaders of the *Franks*, when they conquer'd *Gallia*, in imitation of the *Roman Cens*, and is still call'd *la Rente*, or *Bale* or *Servile Tenure*.

|| *Rentes foncieres*--- These are the Rents of Accession, or Additions, which are paid to the Lord or Chief-Rent; viz. Rent-Servile, Rent-Service, or Fee-Farm.

payable in Money or in Kind ; the † *Champarts*, * *Bordelage*, and other like Rights. I only say, that those Services or Rights, are for the greatest part, owing to particular Causes ; as is plain from their Names, according to the different Countries where they are in use ; and from certain Fantastical Customs, which even want a Name, and could have no other Beginning but the Caprice of a Master.

As *France* grew more Uniform in its Government, Time swept away many of these Irregular Customs : some were entirely abolish'd, others confounded, or mix'd with those, to which they bore the nearest Resemblance ; and of them such as were more universally receiv'd, were taken into our Common Law.

† *Champarts*.— Field-Rent. Half, Part, or the Twelfth-part of the Crop due by Bargain or Custom, unto the Lord or Owner of the Land.

* *Bordelage*.— A Condition by which Lands are held, viz. that a certain Annual Acknowledgment be made to the Lord or Owner. It is so call'd from the old French Word *Bordelle*, which signifies a Quarter of an Acre, Meadow, or Pasture Ground.

*Rights of
Corporation.*

THE Rights of Communities and Corporations, also introduc'd great Innovations: For 'twas about this time, that the Inhabitants of Towns and Cities, began to unite in Societies, under the Protection of some Great Man, able to skreen them from the Oppression of others; and obtain'd the Privilege of being try'd by their Peers. 'Tis likely, that the first that began this Custom, were the Inhabitants of Episcopal Cities, and other Free-Men: But in time, the Vassals or Servile Tenants, belonging to several Towns and Villages, purchas'd their Freedom of their Lords, at high Rates; in order to have the same Liberty of uniting for their Common Defence, and to have several special Privileges.

IN the time of the *Romans*, there were in *Gaul*, as well as every where else, abundance of Slaves: But the Gentleness of Christianity, and good Usage of the *Germans*, who were unaccustom'd to be waded on, by degrees, render'd their Conversion much easier; so that in the Age of the *Christians*, Customs were formed, they were in no other state of Bondage, than the Obligation of taking care of certain Lands, and not to dispose of Themselves and Goods

by Will, Marriage, or Religious Vow, as they should think proper. By this means, the Power of the Lords was reduced chiefly to Three kinds of Right ; * *Poursuite*, † *Formariage*, and || *Mainmorte*, which are very famous Customs : Hence it is, that Vassals are often call'd *Gens de Poursuite*,

* *Poursuite*.--- A Right of obliging Vassals to dwell upon and cultivate such Lands, these were call'd *Gens de Poursuite* ; because they were liable to be pursued, and reclaim'd by their Lords, where-ever they went, for the Labour and Service due to them.

† *Formariage*.--- The Half or Third, or as the Custom is, other part of a Villain's Substance, payable to his Lord, if he marry a Woman that is Free, or a Foreigner : And this, altho' he has leave to do it ; for otherwise, he loses Sixty Shillings more.

|| *Mainmorte*.--- The Right a Lord has to the Estate of a Villain dying without Heir of his Body, and no Tenant in common with any other of his own Condition. There is a Difference between the *Gens de Poursuite* and *Mainmorte* : The first were born Vassals, and could not by any means become free, without the Consent of their Lord ; but were like the Roman Slaves, *adscriptos Glebe* ; the latter were Vassals, only relatively, as they held certain Lands by that Tenure ; but leaving the Land and Goods upon it to the Lord, might make themselves freemen when they pleas'd.

Main-

Mainmorte, or *Mortallables*; because they were subject to pay Toll or Tallage to their Lords: They were likewise called, *Hommes* and *Femmes de Corps*, or *Gens de pote*, or *Villains*, from the Villages they inhabited. But Enfranchisements became so common, after the Reign of St. *Louis*, that there are very few Footsteps remaining, of that Rank of Men.

Ecclesiastical Power. A third Cause of Alteration in the *French* Laws, was the Exorbitance of Ecclesiastical Power: Under the *Roman* Empire, the Bishops frequently exercis'd Secular Jurisdiction; and decided Controversies between the People; who, persuaded of their Integrity and Prudence, chose them for Arbitrators. The Usefulness of those Arbitrations was so apparent, that they were authorized by a Law in the *Theodosian* Code, importing, That if one of the Parties, declar'd himself contented, to stand to the Bishop's Decision, the other should be obliged to agree to it, whatever state the Suit might be in.

THIS LAW, no Doubt, was duly observ'd by the *Gauls*, when, during the Time of *Theodosius*, there were so many Bishops celebrated for Piety and Learning. And tho' the Church's Authority was

thing lessen'd, by this frequent Change of Masters, and under the Kings of the First Race; yet, the Bishops were ever in great Power and Esteem; not only with the Romans, but even with their New Converts, over whom they had such an Influence, as to make them tremble at the very Name of St. Martin.

IN the Time of the Second Race, we find the Law of the *Theodosian* Code, solemnly authorized: For the Emperor, after enumerating the several Nations under his Dominion, in order to repeal their particular Laws, takes exact notice of the Place from whence that Constitution is drawn; and orders it should be held of equal Virtue with the Capitulars, by Priests as well as Lay-Men, and then sets down the Words of it at Length. This Law therefore, was observed, as long as the Regal Power stood undiminis'd; and the Acts of those Times, make it evident, that Bishops and Abbats, as well as Earls, were sent into Provinces to see the Laws executed: and were admitted into the Councils of State.

The low Condition Monarchy was then in, rather increas'd, than abated the Ecclesiastical Power: For before these New-coin'd

coin'd Jurisdictions could gather Strength and whilst the ill Effects of these lasted, 'tis natural to suppose, the People were more inclined to submit to the Ecclesiastical Power, than to the Secular ; which was either unfixed, or so new, that the Usurpation was plainly seen through it : Besides, the Laity were so profoundly Ignorant, that they stood in need of Clerks in all their Affairs, not only to debate and resolve Doubts, but even to read and draw up their Deeds and Instruments.

IN a Word, there being no fix'd Rule of Justice left among the Great Men, the Interposition of Bishops and Abbats, became more necessary than ever : So that generally speaking, they were the only Peace-makers, and summon'd, and made part of those frequent Assemblies. 'Tis certain, that their thus preserving Peace, and the Injustice of Lay-Judges ; gave grounds to the Bishops, to stretch their Authority so far, that the Laity at length complain'd of, and oppos'd it : And this occasion'd those long and cruel * Divisions, which distracted *Germany* and *Italy*.

* The Faction of the *Guelfs* and *Gibelines*.

BUT without dwelling any longer upon the History of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, I shall content my self, with having observ'd the Changes it brought into the Civil Law; by enlarging the Canonically, and making it a principal Ingredient in the Composition of the *French Law*.

THIS is what occurs to me concerning the Origine of Customs; and to close my Conjectures, I am of Opinion, that the Study of the Antient Law, became then discontinued, tho' not the Practice; which was carried on, without Distinction of Laws, as the People had none left between them; that it underwent great Alterations by the New Laws, that were established, especially in Relation to Publick Power, and great extent of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction: Those Alterations increased by degrees, by reason of the little Correspondence between the Provinces; and even between all the little neighbouring Districts: For the Division was so wide, that in the Days of King Robert, an Abbat of *Cluny*, being invited by *Bouchard Earl of Paris*, to settle some Monks at *St. Maurice des Fossees*, look'd upon it as a long and fatiguing Journey; complaining, how great a Hardship it was upon

on him, to be oblig'd to go in a strange and unknown Countrey.

Thus, the same Causes which brought forth the Customs, gave them a different Form in each Countrey. I call that a Countrey which, by the Acts in the Reign of *Charlemagne* and his Successors, is term'd *Pagus*; that is, the District or Territory of every City, govern'd by an Earl, and was generally a Diocess. This Variety of Customs, arose, as *du Moulin* conjectures, from the several Means used in usurping the Publick Power; from the Difference in the Treaties and Contracts of the Lords between themselves, and between them and the Commons; from the peculiar Style of each Jurisdiction, and the various Opinions of Judges.

THE state of Hostility those Countries liv'd in, did not a little contribute thereto; being ever at Defiance with each other: Insomuch, that great part of their Customs consisted of the Laws of War, which had its proper Rules and Maxims. And for this Reason, the Diversity is much greater, in the Provinces subject to different Princes, as those under the Dominion of *England*, and those of *France*. Reasons of State too, often interfer'd; every Prince being

being desirous to keep his Subjects, in all respects, at as great a Distance as possible, from those of his Neighbours: in order to render a Re union or Agreement the more difficult. But in those Countries that obey'd the same Sovereign, the Jealousie which is natural among Neighbours, made their Judges and Magistrates affect different Rules and Maxims, and transmitted that Emulation to Posterity.

THIS was the State of *France*, when the Study of the *Roman Law* revived; not of the *Theodosian Code*, which before the Troubles was call'd the *Roman Law*, both in *Gaul* and *Spain*: But known, at this Time, only to a few Learned Men; and afterwards, lay buried in Oblivion, till the Beginning of the last Century. In the Year 1528. it was printed after Three Manuscripts found in *Germany*; and this Edition, is that of *Charlemagne*, which, as I said before, is the same with *Alaric's*. Another Piece of that Code, as it was call'd by *Theodosius* himself, has been since recovered.

THAT Law, which began to be studied in our Time I speak of, was the same that we read now, I mean *Justinian's*; till then, scarce heard of in the *West*:

For when *Justinian* publish'd it, about the Year 530. there were but *Two Provinces* in all *Europe*, that paid him willing Obedience; *Greece*, and the greatest Part of the Countrey under the Governor of *Illyrium*. *Gaul* and *Spain*, had both shaken off the *Roman* Yoke, above an Age before; *Germany* never felt it; and as for *Italy*, the *Goths* held out long against *Belisarius*, and were succeeded by the *Lombards*: So that the *Justinian* Law, was no where in use, but in *Greece*, *Illyrium*, and a small Part of *Italy*, then subject to the *Romans*.

'Tis foreign to my Purpose, to enquire what became of this Law in *Greece*, and the *East*; 'tis sufficient to say, they had no other for Three Ages; and that Three Hundred and fifty Years after, the Emperor *Leo*, Sirnam'd *the Philosopher*, order'd a new Collection of all *Justinian's* Books, which he mix'd and dispos'd after a different Method, dividing them into Sixty Parts; intituled, *The Βασιλικα*. They were written in *Greek*, because the *Latin* Tongue was grown Obsolete, and not understood by those under the Empire of *Constantinople*; altho' they still affected to be call'd *Romans*, (as their Posterity do to this Day :) So that it was *Justinian's* Law,
in

in Substance, which was preserved there till the Downfal of that Empire.

BUT its Fortune was quite otherwif in the *West*: In *Italy* it continued on its Ground; and the *Roman Law* observed there from *Justinian's* Time, was the own, and not the *Theodofian*, as in *Gaul* and *Spain*: Some Proofs whereof, we have in the Epistles of *St. Gregory*, who Flourifhed under *Mauricius* and *Phocas*; and in the Second Council of *Troyes*, held by *John VIII.* in the Year 878. where *Justinian's* Law, is quoted in the Article againft Sacrilege.

BUT it was very much chang'd, in the Four following Ages, by the Mixture of different Nations, that fucceeded in the Poffeffion of *Italy*. The *Lombards* expell'd the *Exarchs* of *Ravenna*, and were again themfelves fubdued by the *Franks*. After the Line of *Charlemagne* was extinguiſh'd, *Italy* became a Prey to the *Hungarians* and *Saracens*; who feiz'd upon the Kingdoms of *Naples* and *Sicily*, and maintain'd their Conquefts, till driven thence by the *Normans*. In *Italy* the *Saxon* Kings being acknowledg'd Emperors, held the Command of *Lombardy* and *Tufcany*.

AFTER so many Transmutations of People, and Changes of Governments, there were, doubtless, very few that stuck to the *Roman Law*; and the rather, because such as did, were obliged to own themselves *Romans*; a Name, at last, in great Contempt, as appears by *Luit-prand*, who lived in the Tenth Century, and says, that in his Time, *the Name of a Roman, gave the Idea of a Faithless Wretch, without Honour or Courage.*

THE Law of *Justinian*, however, was not so entirely lost in *Italy*, but that they had some Knowledge of it in the Eleventh Century; especially in the Places where the *Greeks* remained longest; I mean, in *Romagnia*, and the Kingdom of *Naples*: This is to be seen, by the Heresie of the *Incestuous*, who in their Marriages, were for following the same Rules as the Law appoints in Successions; and were therefore condemn'd by *Pope *Alexander II.* in 1065. But his Constitution quoted in *Gratian's Decree*, mentions only *Justinian's Law* in General, without naming either * *Code* or

* In the References made use of by Civilians, *ad Justinianum*, it denotes the *Institutes*: But if the *Code* or *Digest* be referr'd to, they are either named, or express'd by these Abbreviations, *C. ff.*

Digest, and cites only a Passage of the *Institutes*.

ABOUT Fifty Years after, a Gentleman call'd *Irnier* or *Warnier*, who had spent some time in Study at *Constantinople*, began publicly to teach the *Justinian*, at *Bologna* in *Lombardy*. The Occasion was this : *Irnier* taught the Liberal Sciences at *Ravenna*, when a Dispute arose between thote of the same Profession, about the proper Signification of the Word *As* : They search'd the Books of the Civil Law for it ; and liking them, resolv'd upon a closer Application to the Study of them. So that *Irnier*, who came to *Bologna*, upon the Dispute concerning the Word *As*, began there to read Lectures upon it, in 1128. according to the Tradition of that School.

He first took in hand the *Code*, then the First Part of the *Digest* ; after that, the Last, call'd the *New Digest* : Then he found out the Second, call'd the *Infortiat* ; and last of all, the *Authentiques*. This is what the Cardinal of *Ostia*, and *Odofredus*, Disciple to *Azonius*, whose Master *Bulgakov*, was One of *Irnier*'s Four Chief-Scholars, report of him. So that he began Teaching, of his own Authority, which

is no Argument, but that he might be afterwards Licensed by the Countess *Maud*, as the Abbat of *Uspreg* says; or the Emperor *Lothair* the Second, as is more generally believed.

SOME Time after, about the Year 1147, *Anagni*, in *Apulia*, being taken by the Emperor *Lothair*, and Pope *Innocent II.* assailed by the *Pisans*, from *Roger King* of *Sicily*, a Manuscript Copy of the *Digest* was found among the Plunder, and carried to *Pisa*, and from thence to *Florence*, by *Gino Caponi*, when he made himself Master of *Pisa*, in the Year 1407, This is what they call, the * *Florentine Pandects*, which awaken'd the Study of the *Justinian Law*; and has ever since been reckon'd the most Authentick Copy.

THEY had many Tokens, which discover'd them to be written by the Hand of a *Grecian*; besides, the Province where they were found, was that, wherein the *Greeks* maintain'd themselves longest in *Italy*.

* See *Francis Torellus*, in his Preface to the *Florentine Pandects*.

THE first Interpreters, upon the
 ving of the *Roman* Law, made on
 *Glosses, References, and Concord
 the *Greeks* had done, upon the
 But they had this great Advantage
 having receiv'd the *Roman* Law
 Fathers, by Tradition; which had
 been so long disused in the *West*, that it
 was almost unintelligible to the *Latins*,
 from whom it originally came: So that
 judging it impossible, as well as unprofita-
 ble, to arrive at the true meaning of the
 Text, they were satisfied with such Con-
 sequences as could be drawn from it; and
 Study'd it after a Scholastick Method,
 full of *Sophistry* and *Chicane*, as they did
 the rest of the Arts and Sciences.

IN these early Times, the Study of the
Justinian Law came into *France*, and was
 publickly Profess'd and Taught, at *Mont-*
pellier and *Tholouse*, before the Foundation
 of those Universities. An Attempt was
 also made, to teach it at *Paris*; but
 Pope *Honorius* the Third, forbid it by
 a Decretal, which deserves Examination.

Obit.
 1227.

THE Substance of this † Decretal, is, that tho' the Church does not refuse the Execution of such Secular Laws, as tread upon the Rights of Equity and Justice; nevertheless, because the Laity, both in *France* and in the Provinces, make no use of the *Roman* Law, and that there are very few Ecclesiastical Cases, but are sufficiently provided for in the Canons; to the End therefore, that every one might apply himself more closely to the Study of the Holy Scriptures, the Pope forbids every Man, to Teach or Learn the Civil Law at *Paris*, or in the Neighbourhood, under Penalty of being render'd incapable to Plead at the Bar, and Excommunicated by the Bishop of the Diocess.

† This Decretal was called *Super Specula*. Monsieur *Claude Joseph Ferriere*, in his History of the *Roman* Law, spends a whole Chapter in shewing, that the Study of the Civil Law at *Paris*, was not forbidden, either before, by, or since that Decretal; which he proves, had a view only to Ecclesiastical Persons: And that the Edict of *Blon*, made upon the Foundation of that Decretal, was, upon a Representation to *Louis XIV.* of the Inconveniencies that attended, Repeal'd, so far as it related to the Study of the Civil Law in *Paris*.

I shall not take upon me to determine how far this Decretal ought to have been obey'd in *France*; whether it was obligatory to the Laity, or whether, from the true Reason, that there were no Professors of the Civil Law to be met in *Paris*: My Intention, is only to take notice of some Things therein mention'd, conducive to the Design of my History: As, that the Ecclesiasticks gave the Preference to the Canon, before the Secular Law; that they and the Laity, were govern'd by different Laws, in the Thirteenth Century; and from the Words in the Decretal, it may be safely concluded, that all Ecclesiastical Causes, for which the Canons had made no Provision, were decided by the *Roman Law*.

As for the Laity, 'tis said, they made no use of it, being guided by such Customs as I have already mention'd; for *the Roman Law*, was the Foundation and Chief Part of those Customs, yet it was so Interwoven, as not to be distinguished.

But what is most worthy Observation in the Decretal, is, the Name of *France*, which is there used in a very confin'd Sense;

Sence; and, if I am not mistaken, for the Isle of *France* only; so that, by the same Provinces, we are to understand *Normandy*, *Burgundy*, and the most Northern Parts of the Kingdom: From whence may be inferr'd, that since that Time, the former govern'd by Custom, have been distinguish'd from those that follow'd the Written Law.

Thus the Law of *Justinian* was restor'd to the World; became more Famous in *Italy* than ever; and spread over the rest of *Europe*, where it had never before been heard of: And indeed, 'tis very surprizing, that Books compiled at *Constantinople*, Six hundred Years before, and sunk into Disuse there, being partly abolish'd by the *Barbians*, should meet with so much Regard and Countenance, in Countries that were no part of *Justinian's* Dominion, as *Spain*, *France*, *Germany* and *England*; without the Sanction of Ecclesiastical or Secular Powers: And that it should be Customary to call them, the *Written*, *Common*, *Civil*, and by way of Excellence, the *Law*; as if there had been none other Considerable. However, this is what I am apt to believe, might be the Cause of so strange an Event:

IN the utmost height of *Barbarism*, some smattering of the *Latin Tongue*, and Footsteps of the *Roman Customs*, were still preserv'd. *Glaber* the Monk, who flourished in the *Eleventh Century*, calls the *Christian Countries*, at that time, the *† Roman World*, and the rest *Barbarians*. 'Tis true, the *Franks* and other Conquerors, had a great Aversion and Contempt for all that then called themselves *Romans*; that is, the Subjects of the Empire of *Constantinople*: But still, they had a confused Notion of the Excellence of the *Roman Manners and Actions*, especially of the Wisdom of their *Laws*; notwithstanding, its Books were very little known, and hard to be procured. The Law of *Justinian*, therefore, met with good Reception, as being that of the Antient *Romans*; for the Wisest in those Days, had not Skill enough to distinguish it from the true *Roman Law*, *i.e.* the *Theodosian Code*; nor to know when *Justinian* liv'd, and of what Authority his Laws were: The Name of the *Roman Emperor* was all they regarded.

ROMANUS,

MORE-

MOREOVER, these Laws were, of general Use and Advantage: for therein, the Principles of the Civil Law were well established; not only in Relation to the Romans, but all other Nations: For there is a Consistency Maxim, in either Law of Nature or Nations, but may be found in the Law; besides an infinite Number of accurate Decisions, in particular Cases. But it was chiefly of service to Princes, whose *Prerogative*, is therein extended in its full Dimensions, free from those fatal Blemishes it had suffer'd in the foregoing Ages; nay, it furnish'd them with Matter to build very high Pretensions. The Emperor of *Germany*, as some Doctors explain'd this Law to him, had a Right to Universal Monarchy; and others said, that Kings were Absolute Emperors, within their own Dominions.

IN short, the whole Design of these Laws, was to render Mankind more Candid and Humane, more fit for Society, and obedient to the Supream Lawful Powers; and to extinguish all † Unjust and

† Yet *Georjus*, in his Book *de Bellis Gothico*, proves the Laws of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, to be more Equitable and Just than those of the *Romans*, in *Justinian's* Time.

Tyrannical Customs, introduced by the Barbarous Nations. 'Tis not therefore so much to be wonder'd, that this Custom first brought to Light by the Curiosity of Learned Men, should, through the Interest of Princes, and Approbation of the People, insensibly establish it self.

It met, however, with a different Reception, according to the Disposition of the People: The *Italians* eagerly embrac'd it as soon as it appeared, they were but just delivered from the burthensome Impositions of the *Germans*, whom they look'd upon as *Barbarians*, (tho' no better themselves;) and labouring to restore the *Roman* Name, and the Memory of their Ancestors, or rather of the Antient *Italians*; they were, besides, no longer apprehensive, by becoming *Romans*, of being subject to the Emperor of *Constantinople*; for about that time it was taken by the *French*: And as the *Eastern* and *Western* Empires were in the Hands of those call'd *Romans* or *Latins*, to distinguish them from the *Byzantines* and *Grecians*; this contributed very much to the Propagation of the *Roman* Laws throughout their Dominion.

But

BUT, notwithstanding this, 'tis certain, the Study of it in † *Germany*, was never heard of till towards the Fifteenth Century ; but its Authority quickly spread over all that Countrey, being then call'd the Empire.

BUT to confine my self within *France* : It has ever had the Force of Law, where the *Roman* Power took deepest Root ; as, in *Languedoc*, *Provence*, *Dauphiné* and the *Lyonois* ; those Places having been the first conquer'd by the *Romans*, and the last by the *Franks* ; and the greatest Part, acknowledging at that time, the Emperor of *Germany* as their immediate Sovereign. Besides, their bordering upon *Italy*, gave them better Opportunity than they could otherwise have had, to study the *Roman* Law : For this Reason, altho' several Customs still remain in those Provinces, different from this Law, yet they are not directly contrary, nor of any great Extent.

ON the other hand, the Customs prevail in the rest of *France*, and the *Re-*

† Herman. Coringus, de Orig. Juris German.

man Law is not there observed, in all those Cases where Custom has made other Provision, which are very numerous.

THIS is the Difference between the *Cus-
sumary* Countries, and those which ob-
serve the Written Law. Whether the *Ro-
man* is the Common Law, in the Coun-
tries governed by Custom, in Cases omit-
ted by the Customs, has been a famous
Question, argued *Pro* and *Con* by the
Two Presidents, *Lizet* and *de Thou*; and
I have not heard it is yet decided.

THE Study of the *Justinian* Law, intro-
duced great Alterations in the *French*,
consisting only at that time of certain
Customs: For the *Roman* Law, as little
as it was understood, was thought so ne-
cessary, that no Body who had not study'd
it, was employ'd, either in Judging, Plead-
ing, or drawing up Contracts: Insomuch,
that all the Officers belonging to the
Courts of Justice, even the Attorneys, and
Notaries, were in those early Times, *Gra-
duates*, and consequently *Clerks*; for as
yet, the *Lazzy* had no Taste of Learning:
These, thinking to make themselves more
necessary, or perhaps more correct than
their Predecessors, changed all the Forms
of the Publick Acts, which till then were

in a plain easie Style, except some sorry Preambles used in all Instruments of the same kind ; but from the Year 1250. or thereabouts, they are clogg'd with an Infinity of Clauses, Conditions, Restrictions, Renunciations and Protestations, in order to exclude the most General Rules ; and often such, as could in no wise affect the Parties : In short, they frequently inserted, what would have been clearer and better understood, if left out.

THE Spirit of Distrust, at that time very prevalent, and doubtless the Effect of the late Dissentions, made every one fond of these *Cauteles*, as they are call'd ; and he that used most, and the longest, was accounted the ablest Lawyer. The same Humour infected the Proceedings of the Courts of Justice : Formerly, Judgments were pass'd summarily, and with little Ceremony, by the Lords and others most knowing in the Customs ; but since, have been loaded with so many Forms and Delays, as not to be ended without the Assistance of Clerks and Doctors : Hence are sprung Deputies, Bailiffs, Stewards, and other Judges of the Long-Robe.

YET, the Study of the *Roman Law*, had its Advantages as well as Inconveniencies. It greatly soften'd the Rigour of the Customs, and establish'd sure Maxims, by arguing from one thing to another; which is certainly the Reason, why we have left off quoting, and even reading the Ancient Laws of the *Barbarians*, that were still in Practice, when the Study of the *Roman Law* first began, according to *Otho de Frisingue*; who reports, that in his Time, the Nobility of *France* follow'd the *Salick Law*: And the Author of the Second Book of the *Fiefs*, says, that in *Italy* Causes were determin'd either by the Laws of the *Romans* or of the *Lombards*, or by the Customs of the Kingdom; that is, as 'tis understood, the *Germanic Empire*.

SINCE that time, the Ancient Laws have been laid aside, and in the Reign of *Philip of Valois*, when it was pretend'd the *Salick Law* was, of such Service, for the Succession of the Crown; the Law was not cited, as of a Written Law, but the Force of it was urg'd, as of an Inviolable Custom: Nay, the very Name of *Salick Law*, was not made use of; and, I think, *Claudius de Seissel*, Bishop of

of *Marfeilles*, in the Reign of *Louis XII.* was the first that mention'd it. So that the Customs received a notable Alteration, as well by the new Forms of Practice in Business and in Judgments, as by the new Maxims and Rules which were about that time first admitted, or at least explained. And this Mixture of the *Roman Law*, with the Customs, makes up the Body of the Laws used in *France*.

*Customs
first re-
duc'd into
Writing.*

It remains now, that I explain how this Law has been transmitted to the present Age; viz. how the Customs were reduced into Writing.

THE Diversity of Customs proved very troublesome, after the Provinces were united under the King, and Appeals to the Parliament became frequent: For as 'twas almost impossible the Judges of Appeal should be acquainted with all particular Customs, when they were not committed to Writing, by any proper Authority; there was a Necessity for the Parties agreeing what those Customs were, or making proof thereof by Witnesses.

By this means, all Questions in Law, were reduced to Facts; upon which, Inquiry was to be made * *Par jurés*, a very expensive and tedious Method, and yet not a sure one, to come at the Truth; since it depended greatly upon the Influence and Industry of the Parties, and Experience and Integrity of the Evidence. Thus, sometimes, equal Proof was made of two Customs directly opposite, in the same Place, and upon the same Fact.

It is easie to conceive, how far this Convenience, of shaping the Law to one's own Purpose encourag'd Perjury, and how disagreeable the Study of the Law was, since, after a Man with great Pains and Application, had made himself Master of the Written Law, or by Reflection, drawn good Consequences from its established Rules, all his Arguments and Authorities might be defeated, by pleading a Contradictory and often a False Custom.

While the Custom, or Explanation of a Custom, was in doubt, the Parties concerned, were obliged to prove it good by Twenty Witnesses, and if Perjury was called, *Enquête par serment*, that is, Troop or Company.

AND indeed, the Customs themselves were render'd very precarious, by the Corruption of Bailiffs and other Officers, who to serve their own Ends, often laid them aside; and the Presumption of others, who inclin'd more to their own headstrong Opinions, than to the Tradition of their Forefathers. Thus *Peter de Fontaines* complains, that in the Time of *St. Louis*, his Countrey was in a manner destitute of all Customs, and scarce any one could be ascertain'd by the Knowledge of Three or Four Persons.

THE Study of the *Roman Law*, I believe, very much contributed to this Uncertainty; for it was in universal Credit; and tho' little understood, nor lawfully authoriz'd, yet every one followed what he best approv'd, or was most able to understand. Besides, those who had the greatest Insight in the Law, had not always the most complete Knowledge of the Customs, which was not to be obtained without long Practice; and their Opinions were very much respect'd and followed, in the Decisions of Courts, and many of them were received as Customs, and so remain.

WRITING was the only means of fixing the Customs, notwithstanding their Variety, to some Certainty: This Work was therefore undertaken, so soon as the Troubles which had caused it were over, and Time had somewhat fixed them; which was about the End of the Eleventh Century: And tho' we have very few Remains of those old Law-Books, I presume, that whatever appears to have been done in one Place, was practised in others; and that Time and subsequent Works of the same Nature, have swallowed up those that were more antient: The oldest I know of, is the Usages of *Barcelona*, authorized by Earl *Raimond Berenger* the Elder, in 1060. and the *Fors* or Customs of *Benevento*, which are, at least, of equal Antiquity, being ratified by Viscount *Gaston IV.* in 1088.

About the same time, that is, in 1066, *William the Bastard*, having conquered *England*, assembled the Noblest Men of each County, and upon their Testimony, commanded the *Anglo-Saxons*, and of the Danes that were mixed with them, to be reduced into Order, which was

ac.

accordingly done, (by the * Archbishop of York and Bishop of London, in their own Hand-writing.

UNDER this Head of Digested or Written Customs, I rank the Books of the *Fiefs* of the *Lombards*, compiled about the Year 1150. by Two Consuls of *Milan*, and intituled; *Customs*; but are in reality only Antient Usages, collected by experienced Judges: Of this kind also is *Speculum Juris Saxonici*, the oldest Original of the *German Laws*, tho' the Learned say, it was not wrote till about 1220.

NEAR the same Time, they began to write their Customs in *France*. These Writings were of Three Sorts; the particular Charters of Towns, the Customaries of Provinces, and Treatises of Practitioners: Let us examine each separately.

TOWARDS the close of the Twelfth, and during the Thirteenth Century, they wrote the Rights of several Corporations, *and Customs of Cities, &c.*

* *Alfredus autem Episcopus Lichfeldensis, qui regem Willielmum coronavit, et postea Archiepiscopus, per praeceptum Regis, fecit, ut in omnibus omnibus quae prelati fuerant, de iure Ecclesiae Lichfield.*

whose Charters, I am perswaded, were the Originals of their Customs. I shall speak only of those I have seen, either intire, or recited in part by our Historians; because they will suffice to form a Judgment of the rest.

THE oldest is the Charter of the Corporation of *Beauvais*, * granted by *Louis the 1st Young*, in 1144. containing an express Account of several Customs relating to the Jurisdiction of the Mayor and Common-Council: It is nothing else but a Confirmation of those Rights before given by *Louis le Gros*; but there is no mention of the Letters Patent, and therefore probably, the first Grant was only verbal. After the same manner, they pretend *William Talvas*, || Earl of *Ponthieu*, made *Abbeville* a Corporation, about 1130. altho' the Charter of *John II.* which they shew, bears Date only in 1184.

I find also, in 1173. * *Henry I. of England*, gave Liberties to the Inhabitants of

Beauvais, || Earl of *Ponthieu*.

Bourdeaux, to choose a Mayor. In 1187. *Hugh Duke of Burgundy*, granted the same Rights to * *Dijon*, that were enjoy'd by the Corporation of *Soissons*; which of Consequence are more ancient, tho' their Charter have no Date. That of the County of *Beaune*, is dated in 1203. That of *Bar sur-Seine*, in 1234. and that of *Semur*, in 1276.

I could mention the Charters of several other Places of Note. Of this nature I take the Establishment to be, made at † *Evreux* in 1205. between the Clergy and Barons of *Normandy*; containing several Gallons relating to the Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions, certified by Men of Experience. The Charter of *Rouen*, given by *Philip the August*, in 1207. confirming the ancient Rights and Privileges of that City, which relate to the Corporation and Trade. Lastly, The Institution of the Corporations of *Rouen* and *Nelaise*, and that of *Partheau de* &c. which is without Date, (but seems to be the more Antient)

* Collection of *Charters* relating to the *Duchy of Burgundy*, by *Peyra*

† *Du Chesne's History of Normandy*

and regulates the Election and Power of the Mayor and *Eschevier* or Sheriff.

BESIDES these Charter Deeds belonging to particular Cities, the Customs of whole Provinces began about the same time to be put into Writing; which, is the *second sort* I took notice of: Such were the Antient Customs of *Champagne*, publish'd by *Pithou*; those of *Burgundy*, which are in *Du Peyrat's* Collection; the Notorious Customs of the *† Chatelain*, published by *Brodeau*; consisting of the Resolutions of the Inquiries *Par turbes*, from the Year 1300. to 1387. the Antient Customs of *Normandy*, and of *Anjou*; the Antient Usages of *Amiens*, and many others still to be seen in Manuscript.

BUT the most Considerable, are those of *St. Louis*, given us by *Monfieur de Cange*; containing the Customs of *Paris*, *Orleans*, and *Anjou*, as they prevailed at that Time: Wherein, 'tis to be observ'd, the Word *Establishment*, is Synonymous with *Edict* or *Ordonnance*. This appears

The Custom House or Guild-Hall at Paris.

by

by *Peter de Fontaines*, who lived at that Time, and in his Translation of a Law taken out of the *Digest*, calls the *Prætor's* Edict a *Ban ou Etablissement*. I rank them, however, among the Customs, because the Preface expressly mentions their being made to confirm Good Usages and Antient Customs, with some Improvements extracted from the Laws and *Canons*: They were made by *St. Louis* in the Year 1270. before his Expedition into *Africa*.

The Third sort of Writings, which contain much the same Things, and may very well pass for the Originals of our Customs, are the Works of able Men, composed about that Time, for the Benefit and Instruction of others: As, The *Advice of Peter de Fontaine*, put out by *Messieur du Cange*; The Book inscribed to *Guigo Blanc*, supposed to be by the same Hand; The Customs of *Beauvais*, written by *Philip de Beaumanoir*, in 1286; The *Rural Summary*, by *Beaulieu*; the *Great Customary* made in the Reign of *Charles VI.* and the *Decisions* of *John de Mares*, published by *Seignier*, together with the *Notable Customs*.

As I. am of Opinion the Records were the Plan, upon which the Customs were afterwards more solemnly reduced; it may not be improper to give some Account of their Contents.

THE Words, *Usage* and *Customs*, *Immunities* and *Customs*, *Franchises* and *Privileges*, are not Synonymous, as some have thought. The Word *Customs* sometimes signifies *Usages*, and in that Sense is directly contrary to *Immunities*, which denote the Privileges of Corporations, or whatever relates to Publick Right: Sometimes *Customs* are opposed to *Usages*, and then they signify the particular *Rites* or *Laws* of a Place, but more especially, the *Services* due from the Tenant to his Lord; whereas, *Usages* signify General Rules applicable to all alike. *Franchises*, are chiefly Exemptions from reserv'd *Services*, (as *Mainmorte*, *Formariage*, &c.) whereby *Vassals* enjoy'd the Benefit of the Common Law; and *Privileges* are granted to *Freemen*, beyond what the Common Law entitled them to; as *Running in the Field*, *Running in the Forest*, &c. of *Causes* to a certain Court. 'Tis very probable, that the Words *Usages*, *Customs*, &c. may

may have been differently taken in different Countries, and I don't pretend to think that they are oblig'd to receive them in the same Construction I have given them.

THE Contents of these antient Originals of our Customs, relate chiefly to the New Rights or Rules establish'd during the troublesome Times: First, the *Rights* of the *Prince*, *Earls*, and the rest of the *Nobles*, with the Jurisdiction of the *Lords*, and that of the *Commons*. In the next place, the Right of *Fiefs*, *Tenures in Capite*, *Bannalities*, and other Signiorial Rights, (as *Giste*, *Furniture*, *Courveés*,) due from the *Vassals* to their *Lords*. The Distinction of *Gentlemen* and *Gentlewomen*, from *Coppyholders* and *Villains*, *Free* or *Bondmen*. The Right of *War*, *Duel*, and *Champions*, &c.

BUT what they are for most at Large is, the Form of *Juries*, and Method of Procedure in the *Jury-Court*: These will never fail to make that Distinction, because of the Ecclesiastical Power, and its time in the Height of its Power. So that one may perceive, the *Commons* of each Customs, always suppose that they govern in Matters of Contract and

cessions, and did not offer to take notice of any thing but what derogated from the Common Law.

Now I am at a Loss to know what this Common Law should be, unless it were the *Roman*. Indeed they often quote it by the Name of the *Law*, and the *Written Law*. And tho' in those Days, every thing almost was wrote in *Latin*, yet these Customs were in *French*, as treating of Matters which could not be well explained, but in the *Vulgar Tongue*, and necessary to be understood by every one.

*In these Writings, one may observe the Changes our Law has suffer'd. The oldest retain much of the *Barbarian Severity*, frequently mentioning, *Wounds* that draw Blood, *Mutilations*, *Fines* upon *Forfeitures*, *Security* or *Safe-Conduct*, and *Breach of the Peace*. But what has been written within these Three hundred Years is all new, comes nearer to the *Roman Law*, and that which is now in Use; and treats of *Marriage*, *Wills*, *Marriages*, and other *Forms* of

I have

I have been the more large upon the Subject of these antient Originals, as being, in the Opinion of the Learned, the best Comments upon the Customs, because they discover their Spirit, and Succession of their Changes.

Customs reduced with

BUT all these Writings could not prevent the Uncertainty of the Customary Law, being either, without Authority, too Old, or too Succinct; wherefore, 'twas thought advisable to make a more Exact and Formal Digestion of the Customs.

THE Project was laid in the Reign of *Charles VII.* who, after he had driven the *English* out of *France*, undertook a general Reformation of every Branch of the Constitution; and among the rest, issu'd a long Edict, dated at *Montil-les Tours*, in 1453. the Hundred and twenty third Article of which, declares, That thenceforward all the Customs of the Kingdom should be put into Writing, and agreed to by the Practitioners of each Place, then examin'd and confirmed by the great Council and Parliament; and that the Customs so written and approved, should be observed as Law, and no other more.

Du Moulin says, the Design was, to jumble all the Customs together, in order to extract one General Law, and that the Writing of each particular Custom, was only Provisional, that the People might have something certain to depend upon, whilst the general Work was upon the Stocks.

It was, in truth, the best way that could be taken to give *France* a Set of Good Laws : 'Tis what the first Legislators follow'd : And *Plato* says, at the Beginning, States were form'd out of many Families assembled together for Convenience ; so the Laws were form'd out of the Customs of those Families, of which the Best and most Reasonable were chosen, and by some Wise Man made a Rule for the whole People ; abolishing such Things of small Moment, peculiar to each Family.

But the same Method might be practis'd in *France*, considering each petty Kingdom as a Family, in respect of the whole Kingdom. This is what *du Moulin* has observ'd, and that time, says was intended, and it seems to be supported by *Robert de Coetivy*, who represents *Loth XI.* as very desirous of having only one Custom.

from, one sort of Weight and Measure; and that all the Customs should be registered in *French*, in a Book fairly written. Hitherto, the first Part only of this great Design has been put in Execution, that is, digesting of the Customs; and it was so long a doing, that it was not finish'd in above a Hundred Years after *Charles the Seventh* died.

The first digested, were the Customs of *Beuthien*, under *Charles VIII.* and confirmed by him in 1495. There were *second* finish'd under *Louis XII.* After the Year 1507, the Work was carried on by *Francis I.* and *Henry II.* and there were still some left undone in the time of *Charles IX.*

The Number of these Customs, including the *Local* Customs of neighbouring Provinces, as the *Normans*, who copied after *France*, and that reckoning only the *Provincial* Customs of the Kingdom, amount to *several* thousand. In the mean time, it was observed, that a Hundred Years ago, many alterations had crept in, since they were introduced in the Beginning of the 15th Century, and that there had been considerable Trans-

sions ; so that many Customs were amended, as those of *Paris*, *Orleans*, and *Amiens*, which was done with the same Solemnity as at first.

IN order to make these Customs better understood, 'tis necessary to be acquainted with the Ceremonies used on the Occasion of their being new-modell'd. In the first Place the King issued his Commission, by Virtue of which, the Three Estates of the Provinces assembled. The Result of the first Meeting, was to order all the King's Judges, Registers, and such as had born that Office, and the Mayors and Town-Clerks, to send in a List or Catalogue of the Customs, Charges and Styles, which they knew were constantly in Use. The States appointed a Committee to peruse those Lists, and to reduce them into one Volume, which being read in the Assembly, they agreed to, or altered as they saw proper, and then sent them to the Parliament to be Register'd.

After this was done, the Customs of the Kingdom were divided into the Customs of *Paris*, *Orleans*, and *Amiens*, which were first digested, and then the Customs of several other Cities, and the Customs of the rest have been added. The Customs of *Paris* are the most considerable, and are the only ones that are now in Use.

Parliament, viz. such as had presided at the Assemblies of the States, where those Lists of the Customs were read ; but 'tis not to be suppos'd they were the Authors, nor that they had time to correct them ; That was left to the Practitioners of each Place, who, no doubt, transcribed them from those antient Originals before mention'd : We are not to expect any great Elegance or Method from these Gentlemen, and 'twas impossible to think of Order or Style when they came to be read in the Assembly ; 'tis enough things are regulated in Substance ; for on those Occasions, every thing is done in haste : No wonder therefore, the Customs are ranged in so ill Order, and so uncorrect a Style, notwithstanding the Commissioners, whose Names are prefix'd, were Persons of great Character and

Laws first
called Or-
denances.

I come now to the Ordonances, which I call none so, but which under the Name of the better Regulation of the Title of Cap, which I call what I call

HOWEVER, I have had the Honour to have had the Regulation made by the Parliament for the Management of the Affairs of the

and Household; for this Word has been long in use: And in the Time of St. Louis, That was call'd an *Ordonnance*, which now is the *Establishment* of the King's Household: Since that, it has been given to all sorts of Letters Patent, by which the King proposes any thing to be generally observ'd.

BUT I see nothing like this, before the Reign of St. Louis; what they give us of his Predecessors, are only Charters of Privileges, and Private Regulations in favour of Churches, Corporations, Towns or Universities. But it is not till Henry II. did not pass those *Assizes*, since which every Nobleman did the same in his own Mannour; and the greatest part of these Regulations, having grown into Custom, are inserted in the written Law-Books:

For as to the manner of establishing a new Law, it is now so decided, the King calls a Council of his Barons; who sit down in Parliament, unless the King demands more than twelve, in which case an additional Council is then call'd, and the Council is call'd the *Advisors*.

The Council is now, as it was in the reign of Henry II. a Council of Barons, but since the reign of Henry III. it has been made up of Bishops, Abbots, and

for the Succession of Noble Dignities. Another Instance is, the antient Regulation of *Philip the August*, touching the Descent of partable *Fiefs*, by and with the Consent of several Lords, whose Names, as well as the King's, are in the Front of it.

As to Judgments, we have the Antient *Arrêts*, reported by *du Moulin*, at the End of his Book call'd *Style du Parlement*; they are indifferently term'd *Edicts* or *Arrêts*; so that the Word *Arrêt* signified only the Result of a Debate.

I fantasie, by the way, 'tis from hence the Practitioners derive the great Authority, they now ascribe to the *Arrêts of Parliament*, considering them as Laws: Besides, before the Customs were reform'd there was no Court more powerful than the *Conseil*, which is the *Parlement*; the antient *Magistrats* generally find the *Parlement* in the Provincial Courts.

To return to
of St.^{*} Louis

* See *du Cange*

the Authors of the History of his Life, have been at the Pains to recite them: They are upon several Subjects; as, For the Encouragement of Religion, against *Jews*, Blasphemy, and the Ambition of Church-Men; For Justice, Of the Duty of Bailiffs and other Officers; For the Government of the City, against Gaming and Bawdy-Houses, &c. One might also recapitulate the Heads of the *Ordonnances* of the rest of our Kings; but that would be writing a History of *France*, by the Laws, which is not consistent with my Purpose; they are to be seen in the Chronological Tables, made of them, at the Beginning of the Conference of *Guenois*: I shall only say, They, in general, treat of Publick Right, and settle the King's Prerogative, and the Power of the Magistrate. From whence it proceeds, there has been a greater Number of *Edicts*, since the Accession of *Francis I.* than in all the former Reigns; because, the great Increase of the Subsidies, and the Multiplication of the secular Offices created, has made them Venal.

There is an abundance of *Ordonnances* in the Proceedings of the Parliament, but very few of them concern the Private Life, or

or that contain any Maxims or Rules of Law: So that the *Roman Law* is of the same use now, as when the Study of it was first reviv'd; notwithstanding, there were neither Customs nor Ordinances at that time.

FOR if on the one Hand, it has lost Ground by our rejecting the * *Senatus Consultum Velleianum*; yet, on the other, it has gain'd, by Admission of the Edict of *Second Marriages*: And all the Ordinances have ever been drawn up by Men learned in the *Roman Law*. The most celebrated, are such as have been made

The *Senatus Consultum Velleianum*, was a Law to hinder Women being bound for others, *ne pro alio femina intercederent*: It is so call'd from *Velleius Tutor*, in whose Consulship it was made. The repeal of this Law in *France* was made by the Parliament of *Henry IV.* but since that time it has been shewn to the Women, that the Law is still in force, and that they may intercede for others, and be bound for them.

The *Edict of Second Marriages*, was made in the year 1560, by the Parliament of *France*, and is a Law that gives the same power to the second wife, as the first had, and therefore it is called the *Edict of Second Marriages*. This Law is still in force, and is one of the most celebrated in the *French* Law.

in the Assemblies of the States, as those of *Moulins* and *Blois*.

THE Parliaments, and other Courts, whose Jurisdiction is Sovereign, because the Prince is supposed to be present, had a Right to examine the Edicts directed to them, and to remonstrate against them, if they thought proper, before they were publish'd; but this is now quite out of use, and they are oblig'd to Register and Publish whatever the King sends them, saving the useless Privilege of Remonstrating afterwards.

THIS is the Best and most Exact History I am able to give of the *French Law*. If any one is inclined to look into these Matters, no doubt, he may find many things that have escaped me; but I shall be highly satisfied, if such whose Profession obliges them to be skill'd in our Laws are encouraged by this Discourse to search more exactly after their Originals.



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